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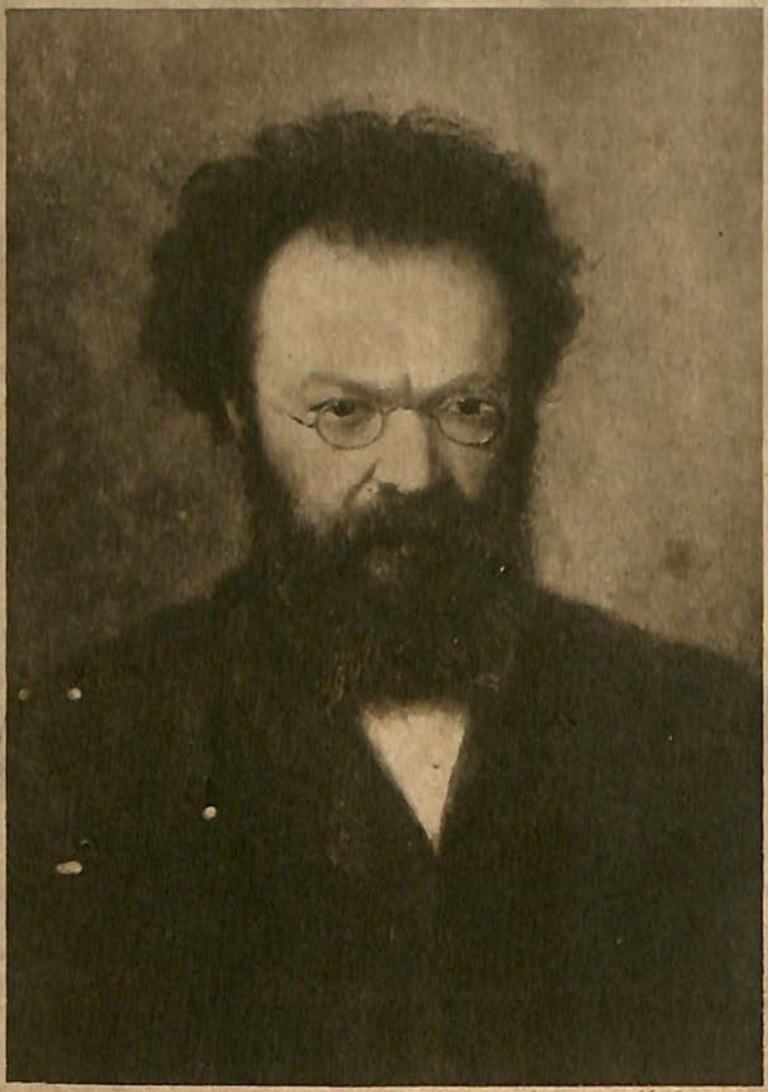

Engraved by J.J. Waddington.

Sergius Stepniak (Kravchinsky).
after the portrait by Felix Moscheles.

RUSSIA IN REVOLUTION

BY

G. H. PERRIS

AUTHOR OF

"LEO TOLSTOY, THE GRAND MUJIK," "THE FURTHER MEMOIRS OF MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF," "THE EASTERN CRISIS AND BRITISH POLICY," ETC.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

"What is passing at present is not a simple riot, but a revolution."—Prince TROUBETSKOY, President of the Moscow Zemstvo, to Prince SVIATOPOLK-MIRSKY, December, 1904.

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1905

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TO

FELIX

CONVICT, POET, AND STATESMAN

PREFACE

We have watched the early stages, and are about to witness the culmination, of a national movement that will probably loom as large in after history as do those which resulted in the establishment of the French Republic and the United States of America. Writing in mid-crisis (for the mind will not wait while events reach a complete development), of a subject so large and in some aspects so strange, one cannot hope to have attained perfect accuracy of detail or perspective. If rapidly written, however, this sketch of the causes, character, and course of the Russian Revolution represents a good many years of observation and study. Moreover, while much space has been given to a recital of personal experiences illustrating the quality of Russian manhood, the heroism of the revolutionary leaders, and the tragic nature of the struggle for freedom, it is hoped that these narratives will not obscure the fundamental argument that the Revolution is no mere clash of personalities, but is essentially the fulfilment of an irresistible economic process. Thus I have sought to show, in the first place, that the historic autocracy has degenerated during the last two reigns into a lawless and incapable oligarchy; and, then, that the oligarchy is being undermined by the very economic

forces which it brought into existence for its own enrichment. In this part of the book I have been chiefly indebted to Russian and British official publications.

For information as to the history and psychology of the revolutionary movement, and for other details, I am indebted to my exile friends—especially the late Sergius Stepniak and the late Col. Lavrov, Mr. Volkhovsky, Mr. Tchaykovsky, and Dr. Soskice; to the files of *Free Russia*, *La Tribune Russe*, and the publications of the Russian secret press; and to friends in Russia whom it would be inconvenient to name. A few passages, including a letter written in Moscow on the eve of the recent crisis, have appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* and other journals.

LONDON,
April 15, 1905.

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* Not referred to in the text. He was arrested and exiled to Siberia as one of the leaders of the "Party of Popular Right," which sprang up in 1894-95 and was almost immediately extinguished, nearly all its active members being caught and arrested.

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PART I

A BLACK HERITAGE

CHAPTER I

MISE-EN-SCÈNE

1. Natural Conditions.

Some of the richest lands on earth, inhabited by some of the poorest peoples—such is the domain of Nicholas II., styled Autocrat of all the Russias. But Nature and History are the only real autocrats. Let us recall the primary conditions of Russian life, before we plunge into the details of the great drama that has lately caught the attention of the outer world.

As it stands to-day, the Empire occupies about one-sixth part of the land-surface of the globe, or two-thirds of the European and one-third of the Asiatic continents. Of this immense territory only one quarter can, even in the widest sense, be described as mother-country, the remainder consisting of lands of conquest and colonization. The British Empire alone, in modern or ancient times, has outmatched its prodigious bulk; but there is this essential difference, among many others: Maritime separation has tended to preserve the diversity of the several parts of the British Empire, to foster liberty and autonomy, to stimulate international commerce and the modern forms of industry. Territorial continuity in Russia has aided the growth of centralization and arbitrary power amid communities chiefly dependent upon agriculture and internal exchange. In the ancient world, before the era of inventions, territorial continuity

was a great advantage; to-day, little England, fog-bound in a corner of the North Atlantic, is in close touch with every part of the earth, draws to herself the good things of the most various lands, while Russia stagnates in her vast isolation. Her northern shores are permanently ice-bound, except in the White Sea, which is open for three summer months; her Pacific coast is closed by ice and fog during the greater part of the year; even the northern Black Sea ports are frozen in winter; and, in the Baltic, Libau alone is almost always open. The Chinese frontier, the longest land boundary on the globe, is far removed from the great masses of population of the two empires, and can never rival the southern sea in the attraction of trade. All this unkindness of Nature is capped by the stupidity of man. There are abundant communications with the West—river-courses, canals, roads, and railways—but they are half blocked by the erection of tariff barriers the most formidable known to Protectionist records. Finally, scores of millions of pounds and hundreds of thousands of lives have been sacrificed in the vain endeavour to hold an ice-free fort in the Far East, not as a commercial outlet—if that had been all, there would have been no war with Japan—but as a fortress from which to organize new conquests of territory.

Except on its West and South European, and its Central and East Asiatic borderlands, Russia has no mountains, and few hills. The very slight central elevation from which the waters of the Volga run to the south-east, those of the Duna to the west, and those of the Dnieper and Don to the south, is important as the source and division of these great river systems. Generally, however, the country is strongly contrasted with the remainder of Europe by its flatness. The plain stretches out interminably eastward

and westward, the Urals—a line of low, rounded ridges through which a railway is easily carried—not constituting any substantial interruption. Lacking heights and valleys, coastline, and such a moderating influence as the Gulf Stream, climate and scenery both differ widely from those of the West. Apart from the regular seasonal changes, which come about more suddenly, there is a likeness of condition in widely differing latitudes, from the land of the reindeer to that of the camel, which gives some show of reason to the claim that this land was "destined to unity." Cold and heat are everywhere suffered in their extremes; winds from the polar sea or eastern sands sweep over great stretches of the continent. The rainfall is small, and rivers on which one can drive sledges in winter disappear in the summer heat. In the coldest month, January, the mean temperature varies from −3° (Centigrade) on the Black Sea to −30° in the north-west provinces. For a period differing, according to the region, between three and seven months of the year, the thermometer is below zero, so that snow covers Russia at least for a part of the winter; and as this temperature locks up not only the rivers, but also the great lakes and even the inland seas, the climate of winter is more uniformly trying than that of summer. The mean July temperature ranges between +15° and +25°; and a warm summer, with an even rainfall, makes culture of cereals throughout the greater part of the country possible without artificial irrigation. In the Western provinces, the comparatively softer winter and more temperate summer favour winter crops; in the East and Siberia spring sowing is the rule. The sudden break-up of the long frost in a short, sharp spring, and the release from the idle indoor life of winter, with doors and windows hermetically sealed

and the great stove ever hot, to the brightness of the flower-strewn fields and the green forests, has provided native poets and painters with some of their happiest inspirations.

Leaving aside the treeless moorlands or *tundras* of the extreme north, which are inhabited only by a few half-savage hunters and fishermen, the sand or saline wastes of Central Asia, and the mountain forests of Caucasia, we may divide the immense central plain of Russia, with all its unity of climate, into two broadly distinguished belts—the northern, and rather the larger, that of forests and lakes, extending from the 65th to the 53rd degrees of latitude; and that of the steppes, extending, say, from Kiëv southward, and broadening somewhat as it reaches the dreary plains of Transcaspia. In the former region, known in Siberia as the *taïga*, which stretches from the Harz Mountains in Germany right away into Asia, virgin forests of birch, pine, fir, and larch, spring from boggy or sandy soil; while plentiful river-courses carry down the needed wood and water in exchange for the grain of the South. Agriculture struggles against adverse conditions; and only in the few industrial centres, especially about Moscow and the mines of the Ural, is there any great increase of population and prosperity. The zone of the steppes, extending from Bessarabia to Trans-Baikalia, is practically treeless, but very fertile. The broad rivers that flow through it, many of them joined by networks of canals, are Nature's compensation for other rigours. The famous *tchernoziom* or black-mould, which is found from the frontiers of Galicia and Roumania to the southern end of the Urals, makes this region one of the world's great granaries.

Here, then, are the three natural resources of the land which most vitally affect the character and

activities of the people—its woods, its waters, and its wheat-fields. Of the rest we need say little except that, in one part or other of the Empire, almost every variety of mineral, vegetable, and animal wealth is to be found. Coal and iron fields occur in parts of the central plain, as well as in Poland, the Urals, Finland, and the Don basin. Salt is plentiful; and the oil supplies of the Caspian region are of immeasurable value. There is zinc in Poland, tin and copper in Finland, manganese in Ekaterinoslav and Kherson, marble and granite in Finland, lead in the Caucasus. The Ural district is one of the richest fields of minerals —from gold and precious stones downward—in the world; and the hidden wealth of Siberia is only just beginning to be discovered. The beet crop leaves a substantial surplus of sugar to be exported after supplying the home demand. Tobacco, vines, tea, and cotton are being cultivated in the southern and central Asiatic provinces. Cattle raising and horse breeding are leading occupations in the south and south-west, and dairying in Poland, the north-west provinces, and Siberia. As over a third of the surface of European Russia is estimated to be wooded (two-thirds of this portion belonging to the State), the importance of forestry is obvious. Russia is still an unspoiled land for the sportsman; and her freshwater fisheries are peculiarly valuable.

But if forty-five millions of people can live in increasing comfort on our own comparatively barren islands, though there must be extremes of cold and heat why should there ever be famine in these immense and thinly peopled territories of which Nicholas II. is over-lord? Evidently, Nature is not the only, perhaps not the hardest, task-master. We must look further.

2. Historical Conditions.

"The immense territory of Russia," says an official writer, M. A. Poutilov,* "which includes the most diverse races, having nothing in common, neither language, nor civilization, nor religious beliefs, forms, from a political point of view, an indivisible unity. Certain parts of the Empire till recently formed autonomous States having their own historic past. At present these countries constitute with Russia a single political organization; the numerous sovereign titles belonging to the Emperor of Russia are only historical souvenirs recalling the progressive extension of the territory of the Russian State. All the political institutions of the Empire, affecting millions of subjects, are administratively centralized, and are moved by the will of the Autocratic Monarch alone. The system of absolute monarchy is, in fact, deeply rooted in the national history, and closely bound up with the geographical situation of the country. In measure as the Muscovite State grew and became consolidated into the great Russian Empire, the autocratic power of the sovereigns became stronger, and administrative centralization, closely bound to the absolute power, grew and was consolidated with it. Thanks to the policy of the Muscovite Grand Dukes, the country was unified, despite its being open on all sides and subject to repeated invasion; it could only defend and preserve its independence by giving all its forces into a single hand. The long struggle against West and East

* Essay on the "Political Constitution" in a composite volume edited by M. W. de Kovalevsky, adjoint of the Ministry of Finance, and published by the Russian Government, in French and Russian, under the title "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century." I shall often quote from this volume, as presenting a recent official statement of facts and deductions, using the French edition (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1900).

accelerated the concentration of power. This is one of the most characteristic phenomena of the history of Russia."

This plea from history is a familiar feature of every orthodox defence of the auto-bureaucratic *réginie*. But a very short review of the facts will serve to show that the truth it contains has long since lost its validity; that, in fact, it is long since Russia proper secured her independence; that the chief growth of despotic power occurred afterwards, and was directed to a quite different end, that of conquest and exploitation; and that, so far from preserving unity, it is now, especially under the pressure of the newer economic problems, an influence tending to disintegration and even chaos in the State.

Russian history may, for our present purpose, be divided into five periods. The first of these covers the growth of the Slavic principalities down to the Mongol invasion. Gathered round the overland route from the Baltic to the Black Sea and Bosphorus, with important trade centres at Novgorod and Kiëv, spreading down to the mouth of the Dniester, and westward thence into Poland and Pomerania, these peaceful groups long enjoyed a simple agrarian communism under their local rulers, easily removable soldiers of fortune who interfered little with the local authority of the *mir* and *vetche*.* Western carpet-baggers talk of the Slav being incapable of self-government. The fact is that down to this day the humble mujik has enjoyed a power over the essential conditions of life, political and economic, such as the Western peasant has not possessed since the dawn of the Middle Ages; and in the form

* See "Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia," by Máxime Kovalevsky (London, 1891); "The Empire of the Tsars," by Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, vol. i. (London, 1893); and "Russia under the Tsars," by Stepniak (London, 1886).

of the artel or co-operative society he maintains his primitive collectivism even in the strongholds of modern machine industry. The State, on the other hand, was from the first tainted with alien and anti-popular tendencies. The *virus* of Byzantinism was even more deadly in the East than that of Romanism in the West. It gave a simple pagan people something of culture, something of ethics and philosophy, but it gave these in a degraded form, and one peculiarly mischievous in that it cut them off from Western thought by its separate alphabet and language, art and political ideals. Even worse, it set upon them the doom of an insane State ambition. First Kiëv, then Moscow was to become the new Byzantium, the capital of a yet greater Eastern Empire. The dream of a vast spiritual dominion survives even to this day; and, while we Western heretics are smiling over the unction of the Tsar and the philippics of the Procurator of the Holy Synod, we should remember that they represent a theocracy not only the most numerous in the world, but the more powerful because it is subject within its own sphere to no such open criticism and organized rivalry as that which Protestantism has opposed to Romanism in the West. Everywhere, and all through the centuries, State and Church have advanced together, mutually helpful, mutually dependent. It is not a single but a double centralization. Yet as the village community, long antedating serfdom and now surviving it, has maintained itself through the centuries against the central despotism, so popular dissent has held its ground against all persecutions, and by constant instinctive reversion to the simplicity of the Gospels now sets an example of democratic rationalism even to the lands of the Reformation. On the religious side, as on the political, it may be said that, while the Orthodox

(which does not even pretend to be a Catholic) Church helped at the outset to maintain the national spirit amongst the invader, that justification has long disappeared. Its great body of secular clergy has not reconciled it with the spirit of the people. It may still be useful as a means of bringing pagan tribes into subjection, but the educated class and the workmen of the ruling race are nearly always rationalists, and the more enlightened peasant is either an open nonconformist or conforms only outwardly and for convenience. The imposing structure remains, but the life-spirit has slowly ebbed away. Father Gapon, prison priest and revolutionary leader, was an isolated phenomenon significant only for its rarity.

At the opening of the thirteenth century colonization had extended the power of the small Slavic republics at the cost of the Finnish tribes in the North, and of the Tartars and Turks in the East. The expansion had reached the middle Volga region, and Nijni (or Lower) Novgorod had just been founded, when it was violently terminated by the Northern edge of the crescent of Ottoman conquest. Russia saved the West from the Mongols at a cost which, prolonged through two and a half centuries of crushing tyranny, has left plain marks upon the national character. Only the religion and the village commune were left, and these became the yet more highly treasured possessions of the people. By the middle of the fifteenth century the Muscovite nobles had become partly Tartarized in blood, and thoroughly imbued with the Asiatic idea of rule. The use of the knout and the *plet* began at this period; the former was abolished sixty years ago, the latter is still in use. Ivan the Great established the Tsardom by suppressing the petty princes and the nobles, and by defeating the Tartar Khans on the lower Volga and the

Lithuanian invaders on the West. Very soon, for good and ill, Russia was to have no independent nobility; to be an aristocrat was simply to be an obedient servant of the Tsar.

So far, the movement towards a central absolutism had some flavour of national liberation. Beggars cannot be choosers, and a people that had been for two hundred and forty years under a hard alien yoke—especially when the primary natural factors of life predisposed it to patient endurance as definitely as our insularity and our temperate climate have disposed us to independence and an equable activity—would be thankful for the smallest blessings that came to them from Moscow. The power given for defence was now, as in lands and times presumedly wiser, turned to the very different purpose of conquest. Ivan III. had married a niece of the last Greek Emperor and assumed the Imperial insignia, the double eagle; Ivan IV., the Terrible, took the full Cæsarian title, and proceeded to eclipse all Byzantine records in cruelty, treachery, and superstition. The notes of this third period are the consolidation of the Muscovite State and the beginning of an expansion which offers points both of likeness and of contrast to the then just commencing colonization and conquest of America. While all the energy of West Europe was being turned toward the Atlantic, all the energy of Russia was being drawn in the opposite direction; and the hands of a race, as of an individual, surely receive the imprint of its predominant task. The "Grand Tartary" of the old maps was gradually submerged. As the Scottish highlanders went to Virginia, so the Don Cossacks struck out into Asia. The capture of Kazan in 1552 gave Moscow the key to the chief artery of the great central plain, and twenty years later Yermak opened the way into Siberia. If the Americans

of European race now number eighty millions, and the Russians in Asia only half as many, it must be remembered not only that communications in the one case were much more difficult, and conditions of climate and soil less favourable, than in the other, but also that expansion was conditioned in the East by a central despotism of growing strength, in the West by almost complete freedom guaranteed by democratic institutions. During what Russian historians call the "time of troubles," which filled most of the seventeenth century, Boris Gudonov practically founded serfdom by a temporary measure, that afterwards became permanent, attaching the vagrant peasant to the soil. But instincts of liberty were not dead among the pastoral Slavs. From its first session in 1550 to its last in 1698, the Zemsky Sobor had an important though intermittent influence. The first Romanov Tsar, Michael, was elected by this National Council in 1613; and in the following reign occurred the great movement of religious dissent, the immediate cause of which was the arbitrary innovations of the Patriarch Nikon.

In its fourth historical period Russia takes rank, under Peter the Great and his successors, as a European State, with a standing army, navies on the Baltic and Black Seas, and a Germanized administration. On the one hand, public works, literature, and art are created; on the other, there is a long succession of court scandals and plots of the grossest description. Serfdom is extended and hardened, the press censorship begins, and the secret police become a power in the land. Finland, Poland, Ukraïna, Georgia, Bessarabia, are added to the Empire by force or fraud. But a second attempt to obtain a constitution, in 1730, and the *jacquérie* of Pugachov in 1773, prove that the spirit of liberty is still not extinguished.

And, in fact, our last period is largely occupied by the struggle of a growing national self-consciousness against the antiquated despotism which is the heavy heritage left to the Russian people by nature and history. The struggle is at first impeded by the necessity of national defence and is afterwards weakened by the drain of colonization and conquest; yet out of these very difficulties has been drawn new strength. Every generation now sees a new and each time a stronger movement of revolt. The military rising of the Decembrists in 1825, and the insurrections of the Poles in 1830–1831 and 1863, led to fresh excesses of tyranny at home and conquest on the borderlands; but they sowed seed that fell not wholly on barren soil. A more general awakening after the Crimean War made necessary a series of judicial and administrative reforms and, above all, the emancipation of the serfs, when the land of nearly half of the peasantry (the other half, the already "free" crown peasants, being differently treated) was handed over to the village communities (*mir*) subject to a payment, for forty-nine years, of redemption dues of six per cent. on the amount of the purchase money; while at the same time a million and a half domestic serfs received their liberty without any grants of land. It is in the nature of a despotism to spoil any such undertaking; and in this case the price paid was often far in excess of the value of the land; the burden of taxes and redemption dues, even when reduced, has been excessive; and the condition of the rural population has been so bad that in some recent years famine and epidemics of cholera and other diseases have made terrible ravages among them.

Every year of the past generation has produced some new proof of the folly of the idea that the many radical reforms now needed can be carried through

without the active aid of the people themselves. Reactionary influences have too tight a hold upon the Court of St. Petersburg to be seriously affected by any spasm of personal zeal in the monarch. For thirty-five years the war between an infatuated State and a slowly awakening people has been waged with increasing violence. The undoing of the reforms of the sixties provoked the first revolutionary movement whose course I shall presently trace. Alexander III., honest, virtuous, obstinate, moody, had no brains for such a situation, and fell an easy prey to the alarmist suggestions, the mystical exhortations, of a Dmitri Tolstoy and a Pobyedonostsev. The great legislative achievements of the reign were the laws of July 12, 1889, and June 11, 1890, restricting the rights of juries, abolishing the elective justices of the peace except in the chief cities, instituting the order of rural commanders (*zemski nachalniki*) from among the local nobility—to whom both rural communes and rural courts have since been subject, and who have the right of inflicting corporal and other punishments without judicial trial—depriving the peasants of the right of electing representatives to the *zemstvos*, these representatives being now nominated by the provincial governor from among candidates proposed by the peasants, and, finally, making the decisions of the *zemstvos* subject to the governor's approval. In a word, the rudimentary fabric of local government and popular justice set up by Alexander II. was practically destroyed, and the one citadel of democracy which the Tsardom has never destroyed, the village community, was seriously weakened.

From the day, ten years ago, when he returned with a severe reprimand the mild address of the Tver Zemstvo praying for the preservation of law and public rights, down to the hectoring rescripts of November and

March last, the same narrow and inhumane spirit has marked the reign of Nicholas II. But throughout this decade of persecution and famine, the subterranean forces which really govern social history have been working fundamental changes. Many things have happened since a sunny day soon after his accession when I first saw Nicholas Alexandrovich at Copenhagen; and if he had had in him the stuff which some of his relatives and most Englishmen were ready to credit him with, that impression of ineffable weakness would have been forgotten long ago. Some of us have never entertained illusions on this score. Now at last the bubble is pricked in sight of the whole world, and it becomes evident that this miserable young man has never been a progressive force, and that for years past, with brief intervals of lucidity, he has been under the thumb of charlatans, adventurers, and bigots. The dominant personalities of the period are a few men like Plehve, Witte, Pobyedonostsev, and it is with these rather than the Imperial family that we shall be concerned in the following pages. The Tsar, though powerful, is no longer Autocrat, is, in fact, little more than the titled chairman of an oligarchic board which governs Russia as a servile estate.

Failure in the crises of self-chosen adventure is no longer needed to prove the hopelessness of this *régime*. The administrative corruption and incompetence revealed in the Crimea, and again in the Turkish war, have received a still more lurid exposure at the hands of the Japanese. But the real test of government lies in the exigencies of everyday life; and it is because the Tsardom fails here even to give the irreducible minimum of security that it is now challenged by a voice rising, not merely from a few circles of advanced reformers, but from all sections of Russian society. Other nations also feel the heavy

hand of the past upon them, yet they progress, while Russia stagnates; they enjoy freedom and growing wealth, while Russia groans in terror and abject poverty. The house of Romanov exhibits the obstinacy of the house of Bourbon, and it is heading straight for the same end.

3. East and West.

(Nijni Novgorod, July 1896.)

Following a path very near to that of the early Slavs from the Upper to the Middle Volga, I have reached the very heart of the country at Nijni Novgorod. From the comfortable upper deck of the small shallow-draught steamer, we have watched, by day and night, the panorama of forests on the one bank of the broad stream, and grassy plains meeting a far distant horizon on the other, with little factory towns springing up here and there along the chain of poverty-stricken villages; while, on the deck below, and in the hours of stoppage for goods and passengers, we could see the humble toilers of a dozen races at close quarters. Reaching the mouth of the Oka after breakfast, and going ashore at the Siberian Quay in the neighbourhood of the timber and tea warehouses, we find ourselves at once, having well chosen the time, in the outskirts of the famous Fair, on the threshold of a market immensely old, still important to the world, and of very peculiar interest to the student of his fellows.

Away from the bustle of the landing-stages, of which each shipping company has its own, we look around at our ease. For a moment we may be reminded of the street side of the cotton warehouses at the Liverpool docks: the railway track, with a row of goods waggons, probably suggests the likeness. But here the warehouses—low walls supporting immense roofs that run

up at an acute angle—have a very different appearance; and lines of proprietorial flagstaffs, one to each shed, give a note of playfulness which would not be tolerated by the materialistic Britisher. The railway trucks are few. Quaint native carts and carriages fill the miry road. Processions of carts pass, laden with hides from Kazan, cotton from Khiva, wool from Orenburg and Siberia, cloths, wine, skin-bound boxes of China tea. Shaggy, roughly smocked labourers, the foremen in jack-boots and peaked caps, ply their barrows between the water-side and the huge stacks of bales, barrels, and packages that bound the road on the landward side. To walk through this busy chaos becomes tiresome, despite the pleasure of clear air and a bright sky; and so, finding the least ramshackle droshky and concluding the necessary bargain, I am soon jolting slowly over the cobbles through the main streets of the Fair to the town. First the Asiatic quarters are passed, where Siberians, Persians, a sprinkling even of Chinese and Hindus, Bokharans, Caucasians, Tartars, Armenians, jostle in motley groups; and, later, the district most affected by Jews, Muscovites, the provincial traders, and foreigners. Down street after street of low two-storied buildings—windowed shop or open shed below a loft for living quarters—rattles the cranky carriage. Each street has its distinctive trade and racial feature, and, between the varied costumes and white-washed façades and the overwhelming sunshine, it is a very gay scene indeed. On the opening day of the Fair, a Church procession crosses this quarter from the Cathedral to the Makariev Chapel beside the Oka, where two flags are then hoisted with much superstitious ceremony, and whence, afterwards, a wonder-working *icon* is taken to neighbouring shops and living-quarters (one cannot speak of houses here)

as occasion arises. The great spectacle-day at the Fair is July 25, when the feast of its patron saint, Makar, is kept. The next fortnight is the busiest time, but this tends to be later as the Siberian traders become less dependent on river communication, and stand less in fear of their way home being blocked by ice. The sham pagodas in China row are offices of tea and cloth merchants. The Western visitor is interested in the *icon* shops, which do a trade valued at about £15,000 a year—just about the same amount as the turn-over of the book-shops. That suggests sad reflections, which are not lightened when we remember that a large part of the books sold are Church publications of the most trashy kind. Near the Cathedral Square are the head-quarters of the pedlars, who play so important a part in Russian retail trade. Here they get the ornaments, icons, prints, and housewife's necessaries that they are to sell among the villages far and wide, or barter for rags, bristles, and feathers. This, also, is a part of the older Russia which is beginning to give way to the more advanced forms of trade. Leaving the old curiosity shops to the antiquary, the average man, for whom the medley of strange languages and customs offers the richest of all curiosity shops, makes for the circus, popular garden, and street shows between the Mosque and Persian Quarter and the Mestchersky Lake, and reminds himself how closely fun and business were associated in the olden times. But the Fair is no mere playground, for goods valued at over fifteen millions of pounds sterling are annually brought to it, the chief sales being cotton goods (more than a quarter of the whole), unworked iron, copper, and other metals, woollen goods, furs, leather goods, and raw cotton and wool.

Picturesque as it all is, revolutionary influences are

visibly at work. The visitor is assured that the Fair has sadly degenerated since the days when the outlandish strangers lived as they might on their native prairies for the whole two months of the annual trade festival, and when the curfew drums went round at nine p.m., lest the over-exuberance of the midnight roysterer should lead to the sort of disaster for which a wooden town offers so many opportunities. Hotels, railways, and the electric light have changed all that; and, while it cannot be said that, as entertainment, the infamous singing and dancing of the modern *café*-concert are any sort of compensation for the old-world manners and customs which they are rapidly killing, we discern some substantial compensations for the general change. The question is asked whether Nijni is doomed as a trade centre. Considering its fine geographical and economic situation, the oft-repeated prophecies on this point are at least open to doubt. But certainly the older Nijni is doomed. Wholesale trade is conducted increasingly by means of sample and price-list; retail trade gravitates to the shops of the great towns and the smaller fairs. Nijni has suffered from the development of the industrial South and the facilitation of local exchange everywhere by the new railway communications, and has only been saved from rapid decay by the growth of trade with the Central Asiatic provinces. Middlemen and commercial travellers multiply; indeed, many departments of the Fair are now mere agencies, and in the iron and other trades Nijni no longer sets the price for the Empire, as of old. There is little appearance of an Asiatic bazaar about these broad and regular streets. Makariev is but a dim memory. There is no dominant monastery to-day—that ancient precursor and fosterer of trade and colonization in these regions. This alone of all the five hundred fairs which

A STREET SCENE.

survive in the Empire still flourishes, and it only by reason of geographical advantages, and because it shows some possibility of progress with the times.

Still, the note of change is not yet as acute as in the Western cities; and Nijni holds some elements of the national life which are unrepresented in either capital. Turning back along the side of the Oka toward the old town, which lies in what, for Russia, is a noble situation, on the hills between the south bank of that river and the broad expanse of the Volga, we feel the old Slavic spirit creeping again into our mind, momentarily perturbed by this inroad of Western commercialism. The broad wooden bridge across the Oka offers a good *coup d'œuil* of this meeting-place of the East and the West. How picture the blaze of elementary colours? Impossible task, lacking the brush of a Verestchagin, the pen of a Daudet! Long-haired, long-robed *popes* (sad dogs they seem, for the most part, and not at all like our own comfortable *papas*), Tartar labourers, pilgrim-mendicants, sturdy peasant women (with scarlet cotton cloths over their heads, and sacks of household goods on their shoulders) mingle with devotees of Paris fashion and army officers of portentous dignity. A row of steamers and hundreds of barges lie upon the river, some still stacked with goods; others, their travels ended, ready to be broken up before the ice comes. Beyond this little forest of bare masts lie the sands (*peski*), where are the iron and fish wharves. Here and there on both banks rise the brick or stone watch-towers of the firemen, and, more frequently, the gilded or silvered bulbous cupolas of churches and shrines, the more important of them surmounted by large chained crosses.

Turning now to the south bank, and climbing up the steep hillside on which the old town stands, we

leave the Blagovestchensky Monastery on the right, and pass under the quaint terraced walls and towers of the Kremlin—"as dear to the heart of the Russian," says a native writer, "as are the Tower and the Holy Gate of Moscow, sanctified as they are by streams of human blood, shed for the advancement of Christianity and the progress of European civilization." Marked by less worthy bloodshed, too, of which the stones of underground chambers and secret passages could speak loudly if stones had tongues. The Spasso-Preobrajensky Cathedral and a neighbouring monastery possess wonder-working icons, relics, and other possessions accounted very valuable; but the records of the great famine of 1891 do not suggest that charity is as important a matter with the Russian Church as it was with the Master who said, "Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor."

Near here is the Minyin Garden, where the wanderer may find a delightful prospect over the two rivers—dotted with steamers, boats, and barges—and the green prairie stretching far to the horizon. Over there lie, on the banks of the river Kerjhentz, colonies of Dissenters. On the dim sky-line begins the forest which extends with hardly a break to the Arctic Ocean. Resting here, one's thoughts go back to the days when Stenka Razin, from his ivory chair on the Zhigoulov Hills, directed his merry men against the caravans of prince and merchant, and yet further back to the days when Nijni stood on the blood-stained border, as a stumbling-block in the way of the victorious Tartars, and, later, when she sent loyal aid to Moscow against insurrection from the West. That was the heroic epoch of Volga-land. While the Elizabethan adventurers were laying the foundations of the British Empire, the opening of Siberia brought to the eyes of the notables of the Lower

New City the vision of a day when the line of the Volga, the Caspian, and the Amu Daria would become the great trade route to India, with Nijni and Astrakan as centres of the trade of the Old World. For a time, sober Englishmen also were impressed by the idea. But, even had there been no foes to overcome within and without, ere the countries along this immense route could be settled, and the Russian State could emerge in definite form, there was an unforeseen geographical factor which changed the whole aspect of events. When Peter set up his *burg* on the marshy end of the Gulf of Finland, and thus opened a door to the West, the passage of the Cape of Good Hope was well established, and England had set her mark upon both India and North America. While Russia was trying to get back to the heart of the Old Continent, the Western nations were pouring out their energy into the New. A century of discovery and advance in maritime arts, resulting in the establishment of far distant colonies, had given a new romantic turn to men's thoughts and new material objectives to their endeavours. Russia lay far from this movement, in a vast backwater of her own, constantly hindered by the need of assimilating large alien constituencies, between which and her original stock there no longer existed any natural barrier.

The difference between the Slavic and the Anglo-Saxon rate of development is the difference between the Nijni Novgorod and the Chicago of to-day. Just now things are moving with a recklessness as marked as the former apathy. Having stood idly by for half a century, while every other progressive nation developed a more or less rational system of railways, the State has been lately engaged in feverishly cutting one line through four hundred miles of frozen and unpopulated

tundra to Archangel, another over the five thousand miles of slightly broken land between the Urals and the Pacific, and a network of lesser roads. It is a common mistake to suppose that revolution can only be made deliberately and from beneath. An autocracy may be the most dangerous of revolutionary forces; it is only necessarily conservative when its own interests, or what it conceives to be such, are at stake.

These are not thoughts likely to be welcome to my host in the Bolshaya Potrovka, whose official duties require his attendance upon the Grand Duke Constantine, a visitor to the town to-day. But they recur yet more forcibly when we turn back in that direction. Our electric tram-car, driven by overhead cable, and conducted on the strict Western punch-punch-punch-with-care ticket system, dashes through this Asia-in-little, leaving the clumsy *telega* rolling astern, and the innocent countryman confirmed in the belief in an imminent Judgment Day. The unsparing ray of the incandescent lamp falls into the seclusion of the wayside shrine, blinding its poor candles, exhibiting, as under the white light of the "deadliest" scepticism, every wretched object of ignorant piety. So, on smaller and larger scales throughout the country, the new and the old spirits clash and grapple. We make our way to the great "Pan-Russian" exhibition which has been set up at the other end of the town. Designed to illustrate the immensity of native resources, we find it really proves something quite different,—that Muscovite obscurantism is no longer based on national aims, capacities, and ideals, but on an alien armament directed against the people by and for the benefit of a small ruling class. The exhibition has cost the Government at least a million sterling to set up, and only a million visitors, all told, have found their way to it, along the

crude and uneven track, bounded by a few wooden hotel-shanties suggestive of Buluwayo or Okhohama, which is the only approach. Those who remember the Moscow Exhibition of 1882 say that the evidence of industrial advance is general, and is particularly strong in the textile and mineral sections. But the period of foreign tutelage is far from being ended; and it is shown not alone in the field of manufactures and commerce.

A yet more important and characteristic sign of Western influence is exhibited in the section of the Imperial Navy. One would like to have the thoughts of the Tolstoyan *mujik* or the Asiatic drover upon these splendid ship-models and machine guns! Adjoining this, curiously enough, is the Education section. Alas! Russia has but few triumphs to boast of here, and Western ideas make only the very slightest progress against a stony clericalism. The kindergarten appliances and samples of school work, photographs of schools and scholars, model workshops, school museums, etc., appeal pathetically to an empty hall which re-echoes with the occasional footstep of a solitary priest or a belated Englishman. A curious comment on this section, as on the whole educational system of the Empire, is the otherwise trifling fact that in the building of the administration itself (to say nothing of private business offices, where it is a common necessity), one sees in use the *abacus*, the counting-beads of our far-back forefathers.

With the Fair at the east end of Nijni, visibly portraying the economic development of the peoples of the Empire from its earliest to its latest stages, and this bastard Exposition in the western suburb, proclaiming the character of a despotism undermined by the very forces it has itself called forth, we cannot but

feel that official Russia has challenged a fatal comparison, has unwittingly shown the workings of a force with which it has never reckoned. Modern energy and inspiration cannot be restricted to the mercantile and industrial sphere. Man is not built in impenetrable sections. Every mile of new railway is a new inroad upon the Muscovite theory; wherever it goes the steam-horse carries with it the dynamic spirit of Watt and Stephenson; the electric spark means new mental, as well as new physical, enlightenment. There is room and food in this land of steppes and forests for the growth of the new ideas. And they grow.

4. On the Eve.

(Warsaw—Moscow, July, 1904.)

The country seems all asleep under the blazing sun. League after league of these prairies and forests, where three-quarters of the Tsar's subjects labour with axe and saw and wooden plough for their precarious bread, swings past us; immense fields of thirsty grain and grass, bounded by an interminable dark border of fir and birch, and over all the relentless dome of unbroken blue. The scene is so vast, so changeless, so devoid of human movement, that the tired eye seizes greedily upon the least sign of life—a glimpse of peasants in coloured skirts and smocks bending at the furrow; a cart just visible over the rippling tops of rye; a group of children driving their little flocks of geese and a few gaunt cattle to pasture.

Here a peaty stream makes an oasis, a meadow gay with gentian, buttercups, and heather-bells. There a wilderness of charred logs speaks of the scourge of a wooded land. A line of dusty highway, with its whitened boundary stones that will be looked for anxiously on winter nights, breaks the green expanse.

We pass villages of a dozen dilapidated log-cabins, and, more rarely, cross a stream fallen to its lowest ebb in the great heat, encumbered with rafts ready for the passage to some hopelessly distant sea.

Nightfall finds us still pursuing our perfectly straight track through the dead silence of wood and prairie. A reedy pool catches more light than the sky seems to give. On the edge of the forest a lamp twinkles in a lonely dwelling with a weird brightness; another sparkles against the deep gloom, then another, and another, like glow-worms.

Yes! in this mute, immeasurable land there are living hearts, faithful and hopeful amid the tragedy of the times. The demon of War is abroad, ravishing these humble homes, leaving women in despair and children fatherless. The sister plague, Famine, is already brooding over fields parched and robbed of their proper labour. It was a red sunset; may no bloody dawn herald the inevitable to-morrow of Russia's manhood!

* * * * * *

They keep St. Vladimir's Day in Moscow with a procession the like of which, perhaps, no other land could show, for the Roman Church cannot rival the splendid pageantry of the Orthodox rite, and the Llamas of Tibet are eclipsed by the brazen confidence of this appeal to the grossest credulity. Rank after rank of priests, stout and bearded, in vestments of velvet and cloth of gold, pass, chanting as only the Russian Church knows how. Each group carries its jewelled icons and relics on poles or in cases, scores of them; and at the rear a small crowd, mostly of women, is held back by a line of police. It is a slow business, for at every church or monastery or shrine there must be a stoppage; and I am glad, at last, to get away to my favourite

evening niche under the canopy of the Alexander II. monument, on the terrace of the Kremlin.

The air is hot and full of the whistle of swallows, the clattering of droshkies in the cobbled streets, the boom and tinkle of bells from now one, now another, of the hundred towers that rise between us and the distant hills. What Asia may hold I know not, but there is surely no scene in Europe like this. Just below runs the castellated wall of the Kremlin, with its ancient turrets of red and green brick; below that again the river, narrow and unromantic, divides the city. Behind us, with brilliant effrontery, loom the cradle and citadel of the Romanovs—palace, church, and treasury, with their ochred walls, green roofs, and gold or blue cupolas bearing heavy gilt crosses. Southward, in front of our alcove, spread miles of coloured roofs and walls, pointed with a few factory chimneys and many more church towers, always culminating in gay, bulbous steeples. Away to the left the white mass of the Foundling Hospital flanks the river; to the right rises the huge pile of the Temple of the Saviour, with its five gold crowns against a sky of darkening grey.

A splendid outlook, if one is content not to see below the surface to the squalor of this vast bedraggled village that is the heart of the Tsar's domains. A city in the Western sense we could not call it, especially in these days when broken households and ruined businesses tell on every hand the cost of war. Two powers there are that do not suffer so—the palace behind, the churches that give childish colour to the scene in front. Yet let us not be too sure. The city seems all asleep under the blazing sun; but I know that, behind shuttered windows, brave hearts are speaking of the day when this most unclean pest, Superstition, and its fellow Despotism, will be beaten back, and the

Russian mind, freed from the chains of centuries, will take its own high place in the vanguard of the world's progress. Have a care, your Majesty, for in that awakening of your people neither Father John, the miracle-worker of Cronstadt, nor Monsieur Philippe, the Parisian mesmerist, can help you.

CHAPTER II

THE OLIGARCHY

We have seen that a despotic government, originally based upon the needs of national defence and consolidation, having absorbed or destroyed the classes which might have provided a check or balance to its power, has degenerated into an engine of exploitation at home and conquest on the borderlands, and that it is at last challenged, not only by the outraged moral sense of the people, but by the newer economic forces whose growth it had stimulated for its own immediate purposes. I wish now to show, by an examination of the actual structure and operations of the State, that this evolution has resulted in the destruction of Government and Law in the only sense in which those words can be rightly applied, and that in modern Russia the State now represents a thinly veiled anarchy, maintained by force for the benefit of a degraded official class at the cost of the body of the people.

This is no mere rhetorical expression. I am at least as tired as any of my readers of the unceasing stream of speculation and scandalous gossip about the Court of St. Petersburg. The characters of Nicholas II. and his relatives will take in this volume what I believe to be their proper place, a very subordinate one, in our consideration of the Empire they nominally, but only nominally, rule. "All the functions of power, the

GRAND DUKE SERGIUS.

NICHOLAS II.

GRAND DUKE VLADIMIR.

legislative, the administrative, and the judicial, are concentrated in the hands of the sovereign," says M. Poutilov; and Mr. Morfill * says: "all power, legislative and executive, is settled absolutely in the Emperor." Such is the official theory, unofficially decorated by a school of sentimentalists who regard the monarch as mystically commissioned and inspired from the bosom of his people, as well as from a higher source. Very brief consideration of the facts will show that whatever may be the responsibility of the "autocrat" his power is not and cannot be real.†

"In the most insignificant things, as in the greatest," says M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu in his great work,‡ "it is the central power which commands, forbids, permits. The authorization of the Ministers, the approbation of the Council of State, the Emperor's name and signature, figure in the pettiest concerns. The Government is supposed to be gifted with omniscience and ubiquity; no detail is to escape it. Acts of private charity are submitted to it like the rest. From one extremity of the Empire to the other not a bursary can be founded in a school, not a bed endowed in a hospital, without the solemnly registered intervention of the State and the Emperor. . . . These diminutive acts of sovereign power often figure [in the *Official Messenger* and the *Bulletin of Laws*] amidst the most important decisions affecting the Government, Army, or Navy, producing a most singular effect. It is an object-lesson in the doctrine that no affairs are lowly enough to be abandoned to the

* "Russia" ("Story of the Nations" Series), p. 347.

† The present reigning house recognizes its power as being limited by certain traditional rules, the chief of these being that the succession to the throne descends by right of primogeniture, with preference to male over female heirs, and that the sovereign and his family must be members of the Orthodox Church.

‡ "The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians," vol. ii. p. 60.

free judgment of local communities." And he adds: "If administrative formalism, implying interminable scribbling and red tape, appears to be opposed to the notion of a paternal and patriarchal governing power, this popular notion itself in a sense virtually contains the principle of administrative regulation. This patriarchal conception, semi-political, semi-religious, so much admired of the Slavophils is, whatever they may say, one of the moral causes of the system against which they have the good sense to protest." The system survives; the "patriarchal conception" was moribund long before the events of January 22, in St. Petersburg. The autocratic theory is, indeed, contradicted by the simple fact that no one man could make himself even superficially acquainted with more than a small fraction of the acts every day committed in the name of the Tsar. In the twentieth century, autocracy after the manner of Peter the Great is as impossible as the *tyrannus* of ancient Syracuse. The real power lies with a few men who control the vast machine without which the Tsar has neither information nor means of action. I do not propose, therefore, to waste words in reciting theories, presupposing a concentration of political power in the hands of the monarch, which have long ceased to correspond with the facts of Russian life. The Tsar has immense influence and corresponding responsibility. A strong Tsar, though he could not give reality to the Tsardom, might have carried the nation easily through the difficult transition-stage from arbitrary to responsible and popular rule. Nicholas II. is the weakest Emperor Russia has had for a century, and at the end of ten years of his reign the country is more than ever subject to a swarm of little despots who carry on a bogus business under cover of the old patriarchal signboard.

Where, then, is the seat of real authority in the Russian State? "All the functions of power are concentrated in the hands of the sovereign; but," adds the official expositor, "the exercise of each of these functions is delegated to special organs, whose powers are rigorously determined by laws, and these laws fix at the same time the way the institutions to which the powers are confided can use them." This theory of distributed autocracy must now be tested by an analysis of the bureaucratic system.

The system, which, as we have seen, was copied from Western, especially German, models, formally, but only formally, recognizes the idea, essential to Western constitutional Governments, of the separation of functions, especially the independence of the judicature, and the subjection of the executive to the legislative power. The organ enjoying this right of consultation in legislative work is the *Council of the Empire*, which is composed of nominees of the Emperor and Ministers. The initiative in legislation is nominally retained by the Tsar; that is to say, it really resides in his favourite officers for the time being, and, apart from such favour, no legislation can be constitutionally initiated. Thus launched, projects are supposed to be studied, in the first place, by the Ministry interested; in particular cases by a Special Commission containing nominees of industrial, commercial, technical, or other interests affected; and finally by the Council of the Empire, in departmental committee and then in general assembly. After this, they are presented to the Emperor, together with the opinions of the majority and the minority in the Council; and at this point his favourite officer for the time being again exerts a determining influence. The decision arrived at becomes the law.*

* "The Council of State was meant to take the place of a parliament, to

Not only may the Emperor ignore the opinions of the Council, however; he may, and does, ignore its existence altogether, proceeding to legislate directly or refuse legislation on the suggestion of some personal favourite. In addition to this leading department of the Council, there are departments of Administration and Finance, concerned mainly with the consideration of the Budget and expenditure, and measures of urgency, including the making of war and peace.

"In the legislative and administrative domains," says M. Poutilov,* "the Emperor decides matters in an immediate and direct way. It is otherwise in the domain of judiciary power. The judiciary reform of Alexander II. had as its basis a rigorous separation of the judiciary power; there was created an autonomous and independent justice. The Emperor is regarded as its head, but he does not take part in judicial decisions. In this sphere he has only the surveillance of the regular administration of justice, and this he

represent autocratic power in its legislating capacity, and at the same time to exercise control over the Ministers' administration. Of these two missions it has really fulfilled neither. It is in great part composed of high functionaries, some in office, some retired, the former absorbed by their duties, the latter frequently incapable, from age or infirmity, to seriously share in the Council's labours. Side by side with numerous *aides-de-camp*, who know nothing about State business, are former civil officers, desirous of re-entering acting service, and more anxious to conciliate the Ministers' favour than to watch their actions. . . . Accordingly, when any really important measure is on hand, the sovereign usually has recourse to special commissions . . , many of which, after starting with a great flourish of trumpets, vanish silently away, without having produced anything but voluminous minutes and reports. The system produces a twofold inconvenience: a dilatoriness calculated to drive to despair, and the loss of all the advantages of a uniform and homogeneous legislation. Hence Russian law betrays a certain fragmentariness, incoherence, and inconsistency" (Leroy-Beaulieu, ii. pp. 72–3). The Shidlovsky Commission appointed to inquire into industrial conditions after the January disturbances in St. Petersburg, and dismissed a month later by Imperial order, is a fair example of the expedient here referred to.

* *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

realizes through the *Directing Senate.*" Once supervising the whole administration, the Senate's powers in this respect have been reduced by the growing power of the Ministries and the Council of the Empire, and it is now chiefly important as the Supreme Court of Judicature, being divided into nine sections, of which two are Courts of Cassation, and two give judgment in political cases and on charges against officials. It can still make remonstrances to the Emperor in regard to the general administration, but this function is practically unexercised. Its members are generally men of rank and substance.

At the head, nominally, of the civil administration stand two bodies, one of which—the *Council of Ministers*—makes but a spectral and spasmodic appearance. It consists of all the Ministers, the Secretary of State (that is, the Secretary of the Council of the Empire), and any other persons whom the Tsar likes to call to his aid. Its hypothetical business is to harmonize when necessary the measures of the separate Ministries. It was intended by its author, Alexander II., in his brief reform period, to be the supreme administrative board of the country; it is now only occasionally called together, and has been practically superseded by the *Committee of Ministers*, a larger body with wider but undefined powers. This consists of a president named by the Emperor (M. de Witte was placed in this chair when M. de Plehve secured his dismissal from the more important post of Finance Minister), the presidents of departments of the Council of the Empire, Ministers, and persons nominated by the Emperor. All business common to or superior to the separate Ministries is supposed to come before this Committee, as well as important administrative questions, such as those of the higher police, the censorship, and famine relief.

It may also have a consultative voice in legislation. Its decisions in all but routine affairs are submitted to the Emperor—that is, they are decided by his most powerful advisers for the time being. Beside this paramount body and various occasional councils, there are three permanent councils—those of Finance, War, and the Navy; and special councils for specific current purposes are formed from time to time, such as the Committees on the Caucasus, the affairs of Poland, and the Siberian Railway.

Nominally executive organs of this higher administration, the Ministries, or at least the chief of them, are the real seats of authority in the State, because they are directly in touch with the people in matters of crucial importance, because they have immediately behind them the great rank and file of the bureaucracy, with its hitherto invincible traditions and *esprit de corps*, and because these are the natural strongholds of the most ambitious and experienced members of the whole hierarchy. M. Witte, at the head of the Finance Ministry—with its sections and consultative committees of commercial, fiscal, and other experts, and its control over taxation and expenditure, the liquor monopoly, the protective tariff, the railways, factories, mines, and industry in general—was to a very large extent master of the State machine, until M. Plehve, his great rival of the Ministry of the Interior, found it necessary to grapple with him; and, after twenty years of successful reaction, Plehve—master of the police and *gendarmérie*, the censorship, the institutions of the nobility, the provincial governors, and the *zemstvos*—was only removed by the bomb of Sozonov. By these two Ministries, whenever they have powerful chiefs, together with the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, the internal affairs of the Empire are practically governed. This

M. DE WITTE.

M. DE PLEHVE.

GENERAL TREPOV.

summary description of their two spheres suggests at once a distinction of the spirit likely to inspire each of them; but under the oligarchic *régime*, though the experts in coercion and persecution may, from time to time, come into collision with the experts in exploitation and monopoly, they are equally anti-social. Some individuals will prefer the pressure of police tyranny to be relieved, others the pressure of taxation to be lightened; the nation, as a whole, has nothing to gain by the success of either party.

The other Ministries are those of Foreign Affairs, War, Marine, Justice, Agriculture and State Domains, Ways and Communications, Public Instruction, the Imperial Household, and the State Control. All these Ministers communicate directly with the Monarch.

Finally, there is the central administration of the Church, *the Holy Synod*, consisting of leading ecclesiastics and long personified to the outer world by its Procurator-General, M. Pobyedonostsev, who is at once the mouthpiece of the Tsar to the Church and of the Church to the Tsar, a position of unique influence. The Tsar is the head of the Church, with its 80,000 married and unmarried clergy, as of the State, and the Synod has powers in religious matters very similar to those of the Senate in secular affairs, combining "legislative," administrative, and judicial functions in the same way. Through its State-protected network of village schools any substantial advance of elementary education in the Empire is effectually stopped.

Such is the central machine. As to the Monarchy and the Church, it is peculiarly the product of Russian history; for the rest, it is borrowed from the West, it has essentially the same problems to face as in the West, and therefore it may fairly be judged by Western standards. So regarded, the first and most important

criticism will be directed not to the details of its structure, but to its complete lack of what, in every other civilized nation of the world, is regarded as the essential basis of government. In local affairs there are two important centres of popular power; in the central government there is no representation of the people, no tie with the people except that which binds master and subject. If, in smaller or more homogeneous States, a public assembly, reflecting the various classes of the population, is considered necessary to contribute the experience and the concern for the general welfare requisite to wise legislation, how much more so must this be in an Empire containing such diversity of racial, intellectual, and economic conditions. Ten years ago, the nation would have been satisfied with a very small modicum of influence in the State; the absolute refusal of that modest demand, instead of extinguishing, has aggravated and broadened it until nothing but a radical reform of the whole system will now serve. Even without any kind of representation at St. Petersburg, the dangerous pressure of discontent would have been relieved had a reasonable liberty of the press and of public meeting been conceded. And even without representation and public liberty, the old *régime* might have long continued, had it not, by its barbarous denial of personal rights in every particular, proved its veritably piratical character. The captain of an Atlantic liner, while at sea, is a type of the only possible benevolent autocrat—one whose autocracy is limited by his responsibility to higher authorities under whose immediate control he comes from time to time. The old-time pirate is a type of the Russian oligarchy, in that he had shaken off all responsibility save to his own crew; the only laws he recognized were those he made himself for his own ends. Any so-called government

which maintains itself above Law, in the larger sense implied in the French term *droit*, and acknowledges no responsibility, is merely a junta of outlaws depending on armed force. It may plead a momentary justification, like that of Robin Hood; but its excuses cease to have any validity directly its subjects, or a portion of them strong enough to provide a substitute government, arrive at a consciousness of its real character and declare for a better rule. The "laws" have none of the quality and sanction of Law when they have not at least a *minimum* of regularity and impartiality of application. From time to time there is evidence that the oligarchy itself, and not the people only, is driven to distraction by the play of incalculable currents of secret influence. So it was at Christmas last, when two contradictory decrees bearing the Tsar's signature appeared in quick succession; and again on the eve of Emancipation Day, when the Ministers going down to Tsarskoye Selo for the Emperor's signature to a manifesto promising some sort of representative assembly found on opening the *Official Messenger* that they had been forestalled by a decree declaring for the maintenance of the old machine, the continuance of the war, and the due punishment of agitators.

In Russia, in short, arbitrariness is the sole dependable characteristic of the legislative and judicial systems; and this arises not so much from a double dose of original sin in the personnel of the administration as from the absence of any real responsibility, and of any of the guarantees enjoyed in other countries, firstly, through a Constitution based upon personal rights, secondly, through a representative element in the legislature, and thirdly, through free criticism by the press, public meeting, and organized associations. Neither responsibility nor guarantees, personal or public, exist under the Tsardom; and it is, therefore, not at all surprising

that the pretence of paternalism is contradicted by a flagrant lack of honesty and justice from top to bottom of the governing body, as clearly as the pretence of being a government of experts is contradicted by its abounding inefficiency. Nor is it surprising, therefore, to find that hatred of the bureaucracy is a sentiment uniting the most various classes of the people; that, of all nations at the present day, the Russians outside the official class are the least "patriotic," in the conventional sense, and the least political; and that, at last, the cloud of revolution has burst over town and steppe and forest.

Of the central government it only need be added here that this unwieldy body, with its atrophied organs and well-nigh hopeless confusion of functions, lends itself excellently to the purposes of place-hunters and "boodlers" in general, and the few strong men who compete for the monarch's prime favour in particular. In a scientific sense there cannot be said to be a legislative organ—a sole determinate body recognized as exercising this function—since, the various Councils apart, individual Ministers and favourites of the Monarch, as well as the Tsar himself, constantly issue decrees which, in any other civilized country, would require legislative sanction. It is of the essence of modern government that the executive should be subject to the legislative and money-granting power, and that the judicature should be independent of both. But the money-granting and executive powers are here frequently in the same hands; and the judicature is absolutely under bureaucratic control—for instance, the practice of punishment by "administrative order," introduced as a temporary measure in 1871, has long become habitual—and so can neither give security to private citizens nor bring the check of law to bear upon

the operations of the Government. Between the various Ministers there is no effective bond; they are frequently enemies or rivals for the highest favour, and factions and feuds among them lead to irregularity and confusion in executive business, which are reflected among the subordinate staff. These scandals serve, indeed, a useful purpose, and it has been said that greater administrative unity should only be desired if joined to new guarantees of personal and public liberty. Viewed as a whole, however, it is evident that such a system would lead to great evils even in a small primitive State based on the individualist principle; in a large modern State, where interference and tutelage are universal,* and where the newer forms of capitalism are springing up as in a virgin soil, the results are of an infinitely more serious character. A man like Plehve, gifted, experienced, unscrupulous, and resolute, forces his way to the top, or may even come suddenly to the top by winning the Tsar's ear. He then finds himself at the head of a vast and highly drilled army, ready for any feat of coercion and exploitation. There is no legislature—either hereditary or elective—to bother about; if the judges are not complaisant, they can easily be set aside; if the press dares to say a word, it can be silenced under pretence of guarding public order and the majesty of the State. Abdul Hamid is a bungling rustic in crime as compared with the head of the Russian police army. Or, again, a man like M. Witte, as ambitious

* "Since Peter the Great, the Government has systematically applied itself to suppress any spontaneous impulse in the country, to reduce it to the condition of an automaton, of a docile mechanism, set in motion by the one mainspring wielded by the Government. The entire administration was cast in a military mould; discipline, orders—such has been the law of the civilian's, as of the soldier's, life, and this law has been extended to all the details of existence with unexampled minuteness and indiscretion" (Leroy-Beaulieu, ii. 67).

and, in a broader way, as unscrupulous, wins his way to the top in an economic crisis, and enters upon a career of financial adventure on a scale of unprecedented magnitude. He creates the largest drink monopoly and the largest and least remunerative State railway property in the world, and piles up a huge national debt. The people who pay for these luxuries have not even the power of open criticism; and, when they at length break into revolt, it is this same M. Witte who offers himself as their (still quite irresponsible) saviour. A system which gives these oligarchs their opportunity needs, not peddling modification, but root-and-branch reform.

This conclusion is reinforced when to the faults of the central machine we add those of the provincial administration. In progressive lands, local government means, in the main, local self-government. In Russia, this is the field of the worst tyranny and the most disastrous obscurantism; and things have gone backward, not forward, during the last two reigns. One might suppose that diversity of race, culture, and language, in a territory affording abundant room for all, would favour a devolution of political power and the encouragement of self-government in the more advanced districts. The tendency has been quite the reverse of this. The people of Kiëv and Odessa, the factory-workers of Poland, the farmers of Finland, are dragooned no less than the rough natives of the Caucasus and the aborigines of Siberia.

I resort again to my official commentator. "Local administration in Russia," says M. Poutilov,* "affords a very varied and bizarre picture, and this diversity is further increased by the complexity of the administrative organization, the result of a slow and laborious historical travail, which has broken the general harmony

* Pp. 85, 86.

of the structure by successive additions. To maintain the tie binding the different parts of the Empire, very great prudence is necessary, and many difficulties have had to be overcome. Different systems have had to be applied according to place and time. Nevertheless, the base of the whole Russian administrative system is the principle of centralization.* This principle had its roots in Muscovite Russia, and was expressed in the reforms of the period of Peter I., who, in its general features, created the present organization of the country into governments or provinces. On this base, the Empress Catherine II. raised a different style of edifice, the characteristic of her reforms being decentralization and the administrative autonomy of different classes of the people. This system was again radically changed by Paul I., and still more considerably by the organization of Ministries, on the principle of the most rigorous centralization. The creation of Ministries resulted in the establishment, all over the land, of organs special to each Ministry, and almost independent of the provincial administration; they had no vital connection with the old organization, and developed independently. Finally, an entirely new group of bodies, the municipal and provincial institutions created by Alexander II. and based on the principle of self-government in the economic domain, was set up alongside the ancient bureaucratic machinery. These successive creations or stratifications have resulted in making the existing administration very complicated, but it is none the less rigorously constituted. Its simplification, with a view

* Leroy-Beaulieu (ii. 65) admits, though he does not accept the contention, that "Russian writers—some of them democrats like Herzen, others Slavophils like the two Aksakovs, and especially Little Russians like the historian Kostomarov—have contended that centralization was contrary to the Slavic genius, which they represent as naturally inclining toward federalism."

to harmonizing and unifying its parts, is one of the tasks that the Russian Government will have to carry out in the very near future." The tasks that even its own scribes regard as pressing would keep the oligarchy busy for a long time to come!

For administrative purposes, the Empire (save the convict island of Sakhalin) is quite artificially divided into seventy-eight governments, subdivided into districts, and eighteen provinces or regions. At the head of each of these stands a Governor, who enjoys a double authority: he represents the central State in general, by promulgating laws, taking decisions having the force of law in matters of public order, security, decency, and exercising surveillance over all administrative and representative bodies of the province; and he is the agent of the Ministry of the Interior in particular, and, as such, chief of the police of the province, and intermediary in matters of public security, public health, economic interests, and charity. Though there are special agents of other Ministries, and central officers enjoying practical independence in the province—inspectors of mines, factories, agriculture, railways, schools, customs and excise officers, managers of the drink monopoly and the State banks, to say nothing of the hierarchy of the Church—the Governor holds a powerful position. He is often a soldier, and then, knowing and caring little of civil affairs, falls easily into the tyrannical use of his police authority. If he does not become an utter tyrant, it is mainly because he has a still more despotic superior watching and using him from the capital. He is aided, in addition to various committees of petty officials, by a Council or Regency, which in the scheme of Catherine II. (1775) was intended to be the real seat of local power, but has long lost its independence, and is now little more than a Police

Board. The districts, of which from eight to fifteen are united in a province, are practically ruled, not by civil or judicial officers, but by police captains (*ispravnik*), nominated by the Governor, and having under their orders in the more important localities commissaries (*stanovoy pristav*), who have under them the rank and file of mounted and unmounted police. The largest towns only have a special urban police. Four towns—St. Petersburg, Odessa, Sevastopol, and Kertch—are constituted prefectures directly under the central government. Moscow has a Governor-General, in virtue of being the old capital.

Of self-governing institutions in towns, of the *zemstvos* and their subjection to the provincial governors and the marshals of nobility, and of that primitive unit of economic life, the *mir*, I speak elsewhere. *Zemstvos* exist, however, only in thirty-four provinces of European Russia. In the rest of the Empire the numerous administrative bodies belonging to the pre-"reform" era are under the direction of their chiefs, along with the marshal of nobility of the province and the mayor of the town, deliberating under the presidency of the Governor. In Poland there is self-government in the rural parishes (*gmines*), under the strict supervision of district chiefs of police; but the towns are administered by magistrates appointed by the State, and have no self-government. The Cossack territories have a purely military administration directly under the Ministry of War. In nine frontier provinces—Finland, Poland, the South-West and North-West territories, the Caucasus, the province of Irkutsk, and that of the Amour Valley, Turkestan, and the Central Asian steppes—there are more permanent general administrations, with much wider powers, under Governors-General who usually

combine civil and military authority. Here there is no pretence whatever of hiding the "mailed fist."

From this brief sketch of the army of the oligarchy, some features emerge in clear relief. We recall the story of the greater Nicholas ruling on a map the straight line from St. Petersburg to Moscow which the first railway was to pursue; and we recall, also, how much Russia might have gained in escaping the inheritance of feudalism as we know it in the West. Autocracy, hard and unquestioned, might be expected to result in a simple, if rigid, governmental machinery. On the contrary, it has given Russia an official structure indescribably complicated, and an immense bureaucracy which, by common consent, is as venal as it is ignorant and capricious. Autocratic "reforms" from the days of Catherine II. to those of Alexander II. have served only to make confusion worse confounded, leaving an encumbrance of institutions that died within a few years because the people were never called to support them, and the oligarchs saw in them a threat against their own monopoly of power. When these men found the new bodies to their purpose, however, as in the constitution of Ministries, or again in the transfer of the *gendarmérie* to the Home Office, they flourished exceedingly, after the bureaucratic fashion. With the exception of the serfdom in its more cruel phases, Russian despotism is probably more generally and intolerably oppressive at the present moment than it has ever been in its long history.

CHAPTER III

THE LAND WITHOUT LAW

THERE are thousands of laws in Russia, but there is no law: this is the gravest of the many grave features of the oligarchic *régime*. With no fundamental individual rights, no independent judicature, and no organ that can be properly called a legislature, the country is cursed with over-legislation of the most freakish and mischievous kind. The "cognoscibility" and definiteness of legal duties which Western jurists regard as so important are completely wanting, with the result of universal insecurity, and perpetual inconsistency and inequality in the utterances of the "paternal" will. These evils are inherent in the auto-bureaucratic idea—they would exist if the Tsar and his servant-masters were angels; hence, there is no hope in any reform which is not fundamental and sweeping.

Alexander II. tried to reconcile the irreconcilable, and the official expositors of the judicial system claim that he succeeded. "The courts hitherto," says M. Poutilov, "were insufficient in various respects; they had no independence; their procedure was secret and rigorously formal; the judges were ill-instructed, trials dragged on indefinitely, the most shameful venality reigned." Some of these scandals have, indeed, been modified; but "the complete separation of the judicial from the legislative and executive powers and the

entire independence of the courts" of which this writer speaks do not exist in fact. Poland and other large parts of the country have never had jury trials; martial law is constantly invoked; and in the two later reigns "publicity of trial, simplification of procedure, and the institution of the jury as a court of the public conscience in the gravest crimes and tribunals of peace in less important affairs"—the basic reforms of the new system—have been fatally weakened. From the beginning, trial by jury was limited to common-law crimes, political cases being referred to special tribunals. The preliminary work of investigation and indictment, which in England depends on the Grand Jury, was left to officials who never had any real independence, and against whom the subject had no redress. Preliminary investigation might drag on for a year or two, the supposed offender, often arrested on the merest suspicion, being kept in prison the while. Gradually, judges became more and more dependent on ministerial favour,* and in 1886 an Imperial ukase, repealing their fixity of tenure, swept away the last vestige of judicial independence. At the same time, the public prosecutor and police witnesses gradually obtained more and more power at the expense of the advocate for the defence,

* The highest tribunal of all is not free from the grosser kinds of favouritism. In April, 1894, the First Department of the Senate gave its decision in the case of one P. V. Nekludov, Governor of the province of Orel. He was charged with having unlawfully flogged a number of peasants who had declined to comply with certain police orders, and several women and old men had died from the effects of the punishment. The Department found that the action of Nekludov contained the essential features of a crime; but, taking into consideration that his indictment would require a preliminary inquiry, during which peasant witnesses would be examined, which was not desirable, and that the Minister of the Interior had taken no steps to indict Nekludov, he was simply reprimanded. As, however, this resolution was not strictly legal, it was necessary that, before its enactment, the Minister of Justice should obtain the sanction of his Imperial Majesty. To the Minister's report the Tsar answered, "I am very glad."

and the status of the bar has been progressively lowered. Little by little the Inquisition has won back what it had lost in the field touched by the reforms of 1864.

To say that the system is now marked by "simplicity and symmetry," that it combines French and English features, and that under it "personal liberty and property are guaranteed as certainly as in other civilized countries," is, therefore, an impudent misrepresentation of the facts. The comparison between the *zemski natchalniki* and English Justices of the Peace is absurd, since the essence of the Russian office is the command over rural local government; and, in fact, Mr. Poutilov admits "a most grave and most essential modification of the organization" by the establishment of military and other special tribunals, by the partial suppression of juries, and by the substitution, both in town and country, of nominated bureaucrats for elective justices under the law of June, 1899, so that "at the present time the beauty and harmony of the great edifice of 1864 are broken in many parts."

The first article of the Russian Code still vitiates the rest of the contents of its sixteen immense volumes: "The Emperor of all the Russias is an Autocratic and Unlimited Monarch. Obedience to the sovereign power of the Emperor is commanded by God Himself, not only by fear but in conscience." But the unlimited power of the Tsar is and can be no other than the unlimited power of the official class by which he lives, and through which alone he can learn and act, the very class which, unaided, unrestricted, makes or sets aside these laws. How is the subject to know the terms and bearing of the laws in a land where free education and discussion are forbidden? They are to be promulgated by the Senate, "except such orders as aré to be kept secret" (footnote to Article 50). But secret laws are

the very negation of law. Article 44 provides that "complete freedom of religion is granted to all Russian subjects," and the following article specifies that this right is shared not only by non-Orthodox Christians, but by Jews, Mahommedans, and others, "so that all the races inhabiting Russia may glorify God Almighty each in its own language according to the faith and rites of their ancestors." But again it is provided in a footnote that "rules defining religious toleration and its limits are fully contained in special statutes," and it is only by reference to these special and unpublished "statutes" that the persecution of the Jews, Dukhobors, and others could be judicially defended. The press laws fill a large volume, but that is not enough, and so they are supplemented by hundreds of secret circulars directing or prohibiting the pettiest details of journalistic activity. All such minor instances of extra-legal law-making sink into insignificance, however, beside the wholesale breach of civil order involved in the system of exile and imprisonment by "administrative order" and the application of the martial-law statute by which, at any moment, the extremest powers can be placed in the hands of the Governors-General and Provincial Governors.

With such opportunities and traditions, it would be absurd to look to the administration to display a legal spirit in its daily work. In fact, lawlessness marks that work from top to bottom. One might suppose that, in the rare cases in which it dares openly to invoke the aid of the courts of another country, the Russian Government would be scrupulously careful in the conduct of its case; but the famous Konigsberg trial of July, 1904, in which nine German Socialist workmen or clerks were charged, on the initiative of the Russian Embassy, with treason against the Russian Government by smuggling forbidden

publications over the frontier, shows how difficult it is to throw off the habit of dishonesty contracted under arbitrary rule. I quote at length some of the evidence given on this occasion, not because it is new or of exceptional value, but because it was given in face of the representatives of official Russia, on the stage they had themselves chosen, and with the best opportunity of correcting misstatements if any were made. The corrections were of another kind. The Russian Consul was forced in examination to confess that he had mutilated some passages of evidence and manufactured others; and the Russian Embassy at Berlin was proved to have suppressed material passages of the Russian law in translating it for the Court.

A very striking episode in the trial was the evidence of a Russian professor of civil and criminal law, Dr. von Reussner, who had resigned his Chair in the University of Tomsk after being censured for protesting against the maltreatment of his students by the soldiery. Having quoted the saying of another Russian legal expert—"above there rules an official lie, below unbounded and wanton caprice"—Dr. Reussner said that even the lower officials and policemen have the power of satraps over the population. While the Tsar continues in theory to be omnipotent and absolute, it is evident that in practice the Imperial power tends to fall into the hands of the bureaucracy. In their turn the ordinary officials have no legal protection against their superiors, exactly as the people have no legal protection against them. By the ill-famed third clause of Article 783, any official can be dismissed or punished by his superiors on suspicion alone; but, on the other hand, officials cannot be made liable to legal penalties without the express authorization of their immediate superiors.

"Freedom of speech is at a considerable discount in other countries as well, but in Russia there are also incalculable and unsuspected restrictions upon freedom of thought. In the sphere of religious belief, for example, secession from the Orthodox Church to other sects is punishable with exile to Siberia and loss of civil rights, while the adoption even of creeds which are not prohibited in Russia is only possible with the sanction of the Minister of the Interior. In any case, for a person to 'dissent' from the established Greek faith is to incur the loss of all civil rights, including the *jus parentis*,* while a number of administrative restraints are superimposed in addition. Moreover, the ecclesiastical authorities possess powers of their own which are independent of the State and of the police. The Consistory Courts are able to condemn even suspected 'dissenters' to a lifelong imprisonment in a prison or in a monastery, or to exile them to Siberia. In the matter of political and religious freedom the Jews are, of course, at a notorious disadvantage. They are not allowed to live near the frontier, nor in particular towns nor in specified quarters of certain towns, nor are they permitted to engage in certain trades. Neither are they accorded a free entry to the educational establishments of the State.

"Another subject touched by Professor Reussner was the condition of the Russian Press. There is no liberty of the Press, he said. The Minister of Education, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice, and the Procurator of the Holy Synod, the notorious M. Pobyedonostsev, can suppress or suspend any newspaper at any time, and there is no law compelling them to state the reasons which have led them to this action. The newspaper proprietor or editor is met at every point by a swarm of censors. They can punish their victim in a variety of ways. They can forbid the insertion of advertisements for a period; they can prohibit the public sale of an obnoxious journal; they can exclude it from the railway

* The practice of robbing dissenting parents of their children so that the latter should be brought up in the Orthodox faith, a comparatively recent invention of the Russian Government, was exposed by Count Tolstoy in a letter which was allowed to appear in the St. Petersburg *Vyedomosti* about seven years ago. Other details will be found in *Free Russia* of February, 1898.

book-stalls; they can entirely suspend its publication until the offending editor comes to heel.

"'What about the right of free meeting?' asked counsel. The reply was that this was a matter for the police. They can prohibit any meeting to which they object, and there is no one to question their action, no authority to which to appeal—in fact, any appeal against police measures brings the appellant into serious trouble. A scientific association cannot convene a meeting without first notifying the police; students cannot gather for convivial purposes without the presence of a policeman to watch the proceedings; workmen must not meet at all in numbers to discuss their grievances."

"Strikes are in all circumstances forbidden. Elementary education in Russia is at a deplorable level, and yet whoever teaches children or causes them to be taught reading or writing without official permission is liable to heavy penalties, because the authorities are afraid that the knowledge thus acquired may be put to an unlawful use."

"As regards the course of justice, it not infrequently occurs that regular decisions of the Law Courts are set aside by secret rescripts, and that sentences passed by responsible judges are altered to other sentences, passed by Provincial Governors, and carried out by Administrative Order. 'But the judges,' asked counsel, 'are they not irremovable?' 'Yes,' answered Professor Reussner, 'but this is only in theory. The difficulty is met by the appointment of vice-judges, who are removable at the discretion of the Minister of Justice,' and whose object is, therefore, to act in a way which will secure the Minister's favour. 'Do you know of cases,' asked Herr Liebknecht, 'of beating and of flogging to death in the prisons of political prisoners, male and female?' 'It is common knowledge,' answered the witness, 'that political prisoners often break out into "hunger-strikes" against the practice of flogging.' 'Is there in Russia,' asked Herr Liebknecht, 'any legal way of demanding reforms—even the smallest?' 'No,' answered the Professor. 'Throughout Russia there is practically no right of petition, and there is consequently no means of effecting, or even of recommending, reforms without contravening the law. The parish and district councils are only permitted to occupy themselves with local affairs, and they are not allowed to address petitions to the

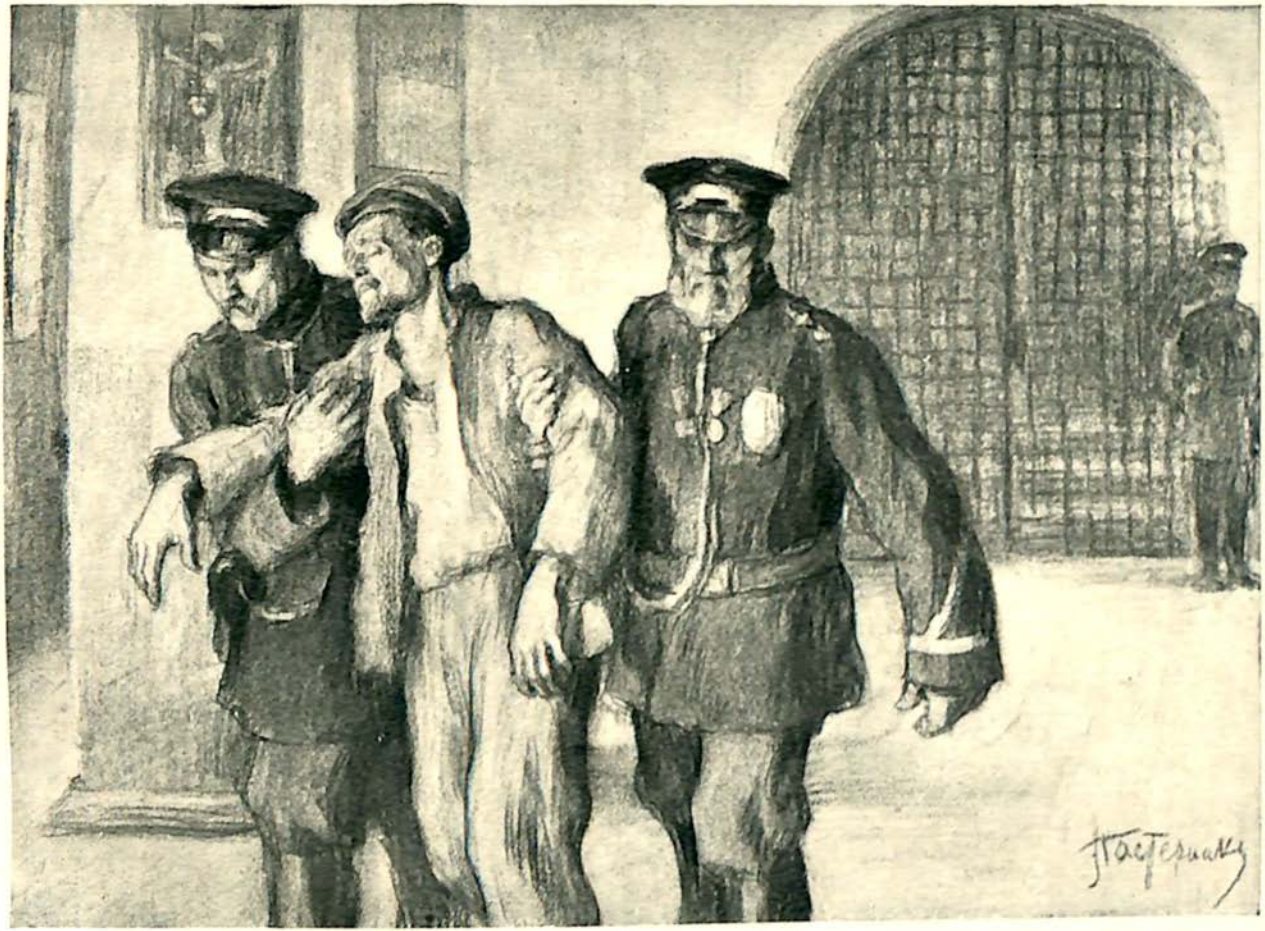
Tsar. The nobles, on the other hand, do enjoy this privilege, but they, too, are not permitted to raise or discuss questions of general interest.

"'In conclusion,' deposed Professor Reussner, 'I must add that nearly the whole of Russia has been for more than a decade under military law. Therefore the Minister of the Interior and the Governors-General have the power to court-martial any civilian they may wish. Flogging, even of crowds on a large scale, is common, and was resorted to notably at Kharkov during the risings of 1902. At the time, the action of the authorities was regarded as an arbitrary and wanton measure, but it has since transpired that it rested upon a secret ordinance of the Emperor Alexander III.'" *

The evidence of another witness, a German who spoke from Russian experience, Herr Buchholtz, contained the following story of a notorious official, General von Wahl, of which there is confirmation from other sources.† When he was Governor of Vilna in 1902, there were some insignificant May-day demonstrations by the workmen. In the evening, papers were thrown from the gallery of the theatre into the pit, bearing the words, "Congratulations on May 1—the workmen's holiday. Down with Autocracy!" Shouts were raised throughout the theatre of "Down with Absolutism!" Numerous arrests of workmen were made, and they were carried off to gaol. Next morning Von Wahl, who was already very unpopular by reason of his coercive measures, including the closing of several Catholic Churches in Lithuania, appeared and ordered the imprisoned workmen to be brought before him. "I have got something specially for you all," he said. All the prisoners were ordered to be stripped naked, including those who were accidentally in the crowd when the arrests were made,

* I am indebted to the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph* reports for the preceding quotations.

† See *Free Russia* (June, 1902) for further details of this episode.



AFTER THE FLOGGING. [*Pasternak.*

From Mrs. Maude's Edition of "Resurrection."

and each received thirty lashes. After the first ten strokes some fainted, and the whipping was suspended until they recovered. When it was all over Von Wahl again addressed his victims with the sneer, "Congratulations on May 1." On May 18, Von Wahl was shot at by a poor Jewish workman, Hirsch Leckert. The Governor was slightly wounded, and Leckert was arrested, court-martialled, and condemned to death by hanging. But the Government was not yet satisfied. The execution was postponed, while for days together Leckert's wife, then about to become a mother, and the local Rabbi, under the pressure of the Administration, besought him to send a petition for pardon to the Tsar, assuring him that it would be granted. After undergoing this torture for some time, Leckert at length gave in. The petition for pardon was forwarded, and when the Government had got what it was waiting for, the execution was carried out; while Von Wahl was promoted to the post of Assistant-Minister of the Interior and Chief of the Gendarmérie of the Empire.

In April, 1903, the Tsar gave his sanction to a new edition of the Penal Code, to come into force, all being well, in 1906, which is somewhat less complicated and more practical and, in a few details, more detailed than the old one. The gradation of punishment depends largely on the choice of certain types of imprisonment and labour; but, as the various establishments necessary to this gradation have never been built, punishments, in fact, very rarely answer to the paper sentence, and the comparatively innocent are often more harshly treated than degraded criminals. In theory the punishments will be somewhat more flexible, and a category of "conditional conviction" in which the punishment is waived subject to good behaviour will be established. The substantial evils of

the old system are untouched, however, and it is clear that no great improvement can be hoped for apart from fundamental political reform. The new Code (Art. 99) imposes the death penalty for attempts, or "intent to attempt," "to deprive the Emperor of his sovereign rights, or to limit those." It not only preserves very severe penalties for political and religious offences; it actually introduces chastisement for cases of peaceful demonstrations, strikes, etc., not covered in the old Code. The worst anomalies of Russian "justice" are left intact.

But who knows what may happen next year? In the Code as it stands, offences against State and Church naturally, perhaps, come first in the eyes of the guardians of State and Church, crimes against private persons far behind. A long series of articles provide for the immunity of the Government from the hostility and even the criticism of its subjects. Public blasphemy against "the glorious Triune God, or our Most Pure Ruler and Mother of God the ever-Virgin Mary, or the illustrious Cross of the Lord God our Saviour Jesus Christ, or the Incorporeal Heavenly Powers, or the Holy Saints of God and their Images,"* is punishable by twelve years of

* "I never entered the cathedral of St. Isaac in St. Petersburg," says Mr. George Kennan, in a paper on the Penal Code of 1885, "without finding on the frame of the *ikon* of the Madonna a number of small articles of apparel placed in order to acquire some miraculous virtue. It would be perfectly natural for an intelligent man, and even for a good man and a good Christian, to express irreverent, if not contemptuous, doubt as to the miracle-working power of this gilded and bejeweled picture. While visiting with my wife one of the holiest cathedrals in Moscow, I saw a number of ignorant Russian peasants devoutly kissing in succession twenty or thirty black decaying fragments of human bone which were set in the squares of what looked precisely like a checker-board. The bones were supposed to be finger joints, toe joints, and other osseous fragments of various 'Holy Saints of the Lord'; and many of the peasants pressed their lips to every bone in the collection, taking them row by row successively, from the lower right-hand to the upper left-hand corner of the checker-board. As I watched this performance I could not help expressing aloud to my wife an opinion with reference thereto which the

penal servitude, with exile for life and loss of all civil rights; while the same offence committed privately, but in the presence of witnesses, receives the penalty of exile without penal servitude. Any one who, privately but before witnesses, or in print, dares to censure the Christian faith or the Orthodox Church and its Holy Sacraments is liable to exile to the remotest part of Siberia for life. It has often been pointed out that Count Tolstoy escapes this punishment; but numbers of less distinguished and less heinous offenders have suffered the same penalty that would have fallen upon them had they been guilty of homicide or incendiarism. Heresy and dissent are punishable, but the heaviest penalties are reserved for abjuration of the Orthodox faith and secession from the Church, and attempts to persuade others to secede. Under these various articles the petty police are frequently engaged in admonishing persons reported to them as neglectful of their religious duties, and especially of the Sacraments.

On the side of the secular authority I need only quote the *omnibus* section under which many of the revolutionists whose stories are told on later pages were sentenced:—

"249. All persons who shall engage in rebellion against the Supreme Authority, that is who shall take part in collective and conspirative insurrection against the Gossudar and the Empire; and also all persons who shall plan the overthrow of the Government in the Empire as a whole or in any part thereof;

ecclesiastical authorities would undoubtedly have regarded as blasphemous, and which, had I been a Russian, might have sent me to the most remote part of Siberia, if not into penal servitude. Many of the rites and ceremonies of the Russo-Greek Church are extremely injurious to the health of the people, and this is particularly the case with the universal custom of kissing sacred pictures and bones. Nothing probably has done more than this practice to spread contagious diseases among the ignorant peasants of the empire, and the terrible ravages of diphtheria in some of the provinces of European Russia are attributable mainly to this cause."

or *who shall intend to change the existing form of government* or the order of succession to the throne established by law; all persons who for the attainment of these ends shall organize or take part in a conspiracy, either actively and with knowledge of its object, or by participation in a conspirative meeting, or by storing and distributing weapons, or by other preparations for insurrection; all such persons, including not only those most guilty, but their associates, instigators, prompters, helpers, and concealers, shall be deprived of all civil rights and put to death. Those who have knowledge of such evil intentions and of preparations to carry them into execution, and who, having power to inform the Government thereof, do not fulfil that duty, shall be subjected to the same punishment."

By further sections, those found guilty of "composing and circulating written or printed documents calculated to create disrespect for the Tsar or the Government" are subject to ten or twelve years of penal servitude, exile for the rest of their life, and loss of all civil rights; while those who, without violent intent, "have organized a society intended to attain *at a more or less remote time in the future* the objects set forth in section 249, or have joined such an association, shall suffer from four to six years of penal servitude, with exile for life, and loss of all civil rights, or imprisonment in a fortress for not more than four years." It will thus be seen that no open reform agitation is possible, and that a man who finds that his brother belongs to a society which contemplates a "change in the existing form of government," and does not betray him, may be sent to exile for life. The writing or circulation of "documents containing unpermitted judgments with regard to the ordinances and actions of the Government," membership of any secret society of any kind, the publication of the proceedings of legal meetings without permission of the Governor, are among the long list of other severely punishable

offences. Any one who leaves the Empire and becomes a foreign subject without leave, if he return, may be exiled for life. If he does not return when summoned, his property may be confiscated. Under this provision Turgeniev was brought back from Paris in 1863 to answer for something he had written. If we bear in mind the hideous network of penalties of which these are but a few outstanding specimens, it will not surprise us to find that those who dared to challenge the "paternal" Tsardom were for years a mere handful of ardent youths, and that their sole support lay in the secret sympathy of a society not courageous enough to follow their heroic example.

All this is barbarity and stupidity in the superlative degree, but law may be marked by much cruelty, and yet be not beyond hope, and even respect. The characteristic of the oligarchic system in Russia is not that the law is antiquated, stupid, and cruel, but that over wide stretches of the national life law does not exist at all, that what of law there once was has been destroyed, and lawless force established in its place. This has been accomplished in two main ways—by courts-martial, and by what is known as administrative process.

During the last years of Alexander II., throughout the reign of Alexander III., and for the latter half of the past decade under Nicholas II., most charges of crime against officials have been referred to courts-martial sitting in secret, with no right of appeal and but the slightest opportunities for the defence. Offences against the State were always subject to exceptional jurisdiction as well as exceptional legislation, but from 1864 to 1878 they were tried by regular courts, though without juries, and officials did not yet share the special privileges of the Emperor. In the latter year Vera Zassulitch, who shot General Trepov, putative

father of the hero of the massacres of January 22, 1905, in St. Petersburg, was tried by a jury, and her acquittal put an end once for all to the open and democratic process in political affairs.* Offences against functionaries, including "all acts of violence, threats, and clamours," were referred "temporarily" to special courts, and, as Leroy-Beaulieu says, "from top to bottom of the ladder the agents of the Government were thus placed outside the pale of common law." But this was not enough. "Discontented with the civil tribunals, the Government preferred the more expeditious and severer justice of courts-martial." A little later a further step was taken. "Military governors-general were instituted, in whose favour all civil laws were suspended, who were invested with the power of arraigning before courts-martial persons coming under the jurisdiction of the regular courts, and of banishing 'by administrative act' any suspected person. In a country where the *gendarmérie* ruled supreme, all this, it is true, was no great innovation theoretically; the novelty lay in the practical extent given to these arbitrary measures. The habitual procedure of courts-martial was deemed too slow; the governors-general were empowered to simplify it by resorting to the summary form of justice in use in time of war. It became lawful to bring accused persons to trial without preliminary inquest, to pronounce sentence on them without taking the oral testimony of witnesses, to execute them without examining into their appeals

* "The Bulletin de l'Institut Internationale de Statistique," tome xi. 1899, contains some interesting international comparisons. In the years 1889–93, of all the cases before tribunals without juries, charges of rebellion or outrages on officials were 2·3 per cent. in France, and 16 per cent. in Russia. On the other hand, it is significant that of prisoners tried in courts of first instance a very much larger proportion were acquitted in Russia than in other countries.

for a reversal of the sentence. As in everything else, no uniform rule and no consistent methods were followed. Political cases are tried according to circumstances, to their importance, or the inspiration of the moment, by a court-martial or by a judicial commission. The *ukazes* of Alexander III., on the 'state of enforced, or extra-ordinary, protection,' really amount to placing a blank warrant in the administration's hands."

The warrant was in full use long before the recent crisis arose. Thus the state of siege existing in the autumn of 1901 in the provinces of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, Kiëv, Podolia, and Volynia, and in St. Petersburg, Odessa, five other towns, and several rural districts, was renewed for a further year in those places, and at the same time was extended to eighteen leading towns and other districts, so that during 1902, out of the fifty provinces of European Russia (not counting Finland and Poland) no less than twenty-four and one Siberian province were under exceptional rule. This meant, if the circumstances really answered to those legally justifying the state of siege, that the most active half of the people of the Empire were engaged in "criminal attempts against the existing *régime* or against the safety of private persons and property, so that the application of ordinary laws proved insufficient for the maintenance of order. This was, no doubt, true in large measure, if by "the existing *régime*" be meant the arbitrary rule of satraps like Trepov, Von Wahl, Obolensky, Clayhills, and other notorious governors. But in that case martial "law" is admittedly a terrorism imposed by a gang of desperate brigands, and is a negation not only of law, but of order and decency. In fact, the powers given to these governors and prefects include the prohibition of all gatherings, private as well as public, the expulsion of

any one they may choose to regard as suspicious without any form of trial, the closing of any shop or workshop, the discharge of any civil officers, the prohibition of the carrying of any weapons, even pocket-knives, and of collections of money without special permit.

This is, indeed, little more than a wholesale extension of the retail punishment by "administrative order" which for thirty years has been the most scandalous feature of the governmental system. Administrative punishment is simply punishment on suspicion, or on pretence of suspicion, without any semblance of judicial process. It begins with an odious police surveillance, with the midnight searches and raids that mark every period of public excitement in the great towns; proceeds by arrest, "preliminary detention," and inquisition; and may end in simple rustication, or in a graver term of imprisonment or exile. Mr. Kennan gave statistics showing that of the whole number of exiles passing into Siberia nearly a half had not been before any tribunal (in 1893 they were 49 per cent.), and most of the cases related in the following chapters belong to the same category. Early in his reign Nicholas II. was credited in the English press with having abolished this arbitrary penal process. The *ukaz* of January, 1896, one of many farcical pretences of reform during the present reign, revoked the privilege held since 1881 by governors-general, provincial governors, and prefects, of banishing from their districts of their own motion objectionable persons other than political suspects, and made the Minister of the Interior responsible for all cases of administrative imprisonment and exile, political or non-political. The governors being the servants of this Minister, the measure effected a simplification of procedure which rather strengthened than weakened the system. In fact, 1699 convicts and exiles were sent

to Sakhalin by administrative order in that very year. Only fragments of statistics on the subject can be obtained. At the beginning of last year Mr. Muraviev, then Minister of Justice, stated that the number of political cases dealt with by "administrative sentence" had increased twenty-seven fold during the past decade. If to these be added the very much larger number of those arrested and liberated after "preliminary investigation," it is evident that the victims of official vengeance number scores of thousands yearly. A report of the Ministry of Justice in 1903 showed that in the first three months of the previous year 2953 persons were arrested on suspicion of political activity (that is, at the rate of about 11,000 a year), of whom 853 were sentenced administratively. But in addition to these over 2000 persons were arrested and imprisoned by the *gendarmérie* under "state of siege" powers; and even these figures give no idea of the many thousands of workmen, students, and others exiled from the large towns without any inquiry whatever.

"Nobody," says Professor P. Vinogradoff,* the well-known historian, lately of Moscow University, "is secure against search, arrest, imprisonment, and relegation to the remote parts of the Empire. From political supervision, the solicitude of the authorities has spread to interference with all kinds of private affairs. To-day somebody is sent out by command of a governor because he is suspected of immoral conduct; to-morrow somebody else, because he is practising hypnotism; and then again, young people guilty of a disturbance in the streets are sentenced to months of imprisonment without the formality of a trial, by order of a master of police. Such is the legal protection we are enjoying in Russia."

* "Lectures on the History of the Nineteenth Century." Cambridge University Press, 1903.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNDERWORLD: MENDEL ROSENBAUM'S STORY

To those who have read Prince Kropotkin's "Russian and French Prisons," Stepniak's "Russia under the Tsars," Mr. George Kennan's articles on "The Prison Life of the Russian Revolutionists," E. B. Lanin's "Russian Characteristics," and other works of the same period, it may seem incredible that the penal system of the Empire can be more cruel and destructive to-day than it was proved to be in the past. Yet, after having watched closely the development of events for fifteen years, after being intimately acquainted during this period with men belonging to three separate generations who have suffered almost every possible variety of punishment at the hands of the agents of the oligarchy, and with the records of several hundreds of individual cases at hand as I write, I venture the opinion that, bad as were the wrongs which prematurely ripened the movement of revolt twenty-five years ago, those of to-day are more abominable still. Volumes would be required fully to justify this impression, and my present object is only to offer authentic reports of a few typical experiences. But it may be pointed out that the mass of misery caused by the overcrowding of prisons has been doubly aggravated of late—in the first place, by the growth of the revolutionary movement in all its parts, and the disproportionate increase of arrests

already referred to; in the second place, by the curtailment of the exile system under the decree of June 10, 1900, and in consequence of the demands upon the Eastern railway communications for the war. Before the recent crisis, the normal permanent population for which prison accommodation was required numbered about a hundred and twenty thousand, one-sixth of these being women and children. To house this army of unfortunates there were seven central hard-labour prisons and nearly nine hundred local gaols. The new central prison in St. Petersburg and one or two others were models of Western severity. In the rest, order and sanitation were practically unknown; dirt, promiscuity, disorder, and overcrowding were general. But, in the interval, the whole force of the police and *gendarmérie* has been engaged in increasing the pressure upon this already too limited space, with results some idea of which may be obtained from the following narratives.

In the summer of 1900, Mendel Rosenbaum, a Russian of Jewish extraction, who had been captured at the frontier in October, 1898, attempting to import prohibited literature, thrown into prison, and removed to the provinces as a preliminary to Siberian exile, managed to escape to Switzerland with the aid of a small sum granted from a special fund raised by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom. By the kindness of a Russian friend I have obtained a full account of his peregrination through a series of prisons, and from these notes I now quote some passages.

Rosenbaum was first taken under escort of two gendarmes to St. Petersburg, and locked up in a cell of the House of Preliminary Detention, where he spent two days with little to complain of, except the food. On the third day, after a preliminary examination by a

gendarme officer and a Crown attorney, he was transferred to the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, subjected to a microscopic search of his naked body, clad in the scanty linen garb of the prison, and locked up in a solitary cell. At the end of a month his first examination took place, and after eight months more a second, the object being to obtain incriminating evidence against other offenders, or possible offenders, of the same desperate character. (It was in this work of secret inquisition that Plehve and the late Minister of Justice, Muraviev, won their spurs.) One day the Assistant Procuror told Rosenbaum, by way of consolation, that he was liable under the Penal Code to several years of penal servitude in the mines and deportation for life, whereas he might hope to get off, under the merciful system of "administrative order," with five years' exile to the Yakutsk province.

"The prospect of being kept in solitary confinement indefinitely, while they would try to collect evidence against me, counted for something. So, when the papers establishing my past were shown to me, I offered to tell the officials all about myself which might lead to my conviction, but without giving the names of places and persons concerned, or any particulars which might lead to the indictment of any person save myself."

This, however, was by no means good enough, and the inquiries became more frequent. Notwithstanding the penalties of long solitude in an ill-lighted cell, Rosenbaum kept his humour. One day a *gendarmérie* officer in glorious uniform called to see how the investigation was proceeding.

"Well, is he getting out with it? Does he write it down?" he asked.

"He does," replied the colonel; "but far from satisfactorily."

The general turned to Rosenbaum and, in a half-coaxing, half-reproachful tone, said, "Write on, write on; and do write better."

"I can't do better," was the reply; "my handwriting was always bad."

"Oh, it is not the handwriting I mean, and you understand that;" then, turning to his subordinates, he added, "Never mind, let him have a little longer experience of the prison cell, and I am sure his writing will improve." Then he left.

Of his chief examiner Rosenbaum says in his notes: "Evidently the smart assistant *procuror* put it to his great credit that he and his like do not burn people nowadays, as the Spanish Inquisitors did. That explains his constantly pleasant and self-complacent frame of mind. He evidently possessed in a considerable degree the enviable faculty of forgetting all disagreeable facts. He forgot, for example, how many young, energetic, and noble men and women had perished far away, torn from their kinsfolk and friends. He forgot how many had lost their reason in solitary confinement, to which they were subjected by the 'humanitarian' government for being found in possession of a few prohibited books, or simply on a vague suspicion of their being 'politically untrustworthy.' He overlooked the fact that, though he and his like did not actually burn people for their convictions, yet the 'mild measures' of the Russian *gendarmérie* have sometimes led people to burn themselves alive. He did not understand that his white, well-kept hands, which he so often rubbed with self-satisfaction, were stained with the blood of youths whose only fault was their yearning for the embodiment of ideals, possible or Utopian, but in any case noble, youths whose lives were crushed in some way or other."

At last the strain began to tell. The food was decent, and, in the second winter, the cell was warm enough; books were allowed, but the light from the small, high, thickly grated window was dim; and the monotony was only broken by a walk of fifteen minutes daily in the small courtyard of the fortress.

"My isolation was made more complete by the idiotic rule of the fortress-jail, according to which the letters a prisoner receives from his near and dear ones are given him only for about an hour's duration to read, and are then reclaimed, and never restored. An additional trial to my nerves was the compulsion to sleep with a candle lighted. I tried my best to keep up my strength by filling up the abyss of endless vacancy of my cell existence. I read, mostly history. I studied Italian. But in the dull weather the cell was so dark that reading was made impossible. I regularly engaged in gymnastics, and, at times, even danced within my four walls (there was plenty of room for that, as the only furniture of the cell consisted of an iron bedstead, a small table, and a washstand, all of them screwed to the floor). The linen was changed twice a week, and I profited by these occasions to wash the floor of my cell, using the left-off things for it. I asked for some implement for this purpose, but was refused.

"The enforced silence was a great trial to me. At times the desire to use my vocal organs reached the stage of physical oppression; but, when I took to singing, the wicket of my door was unlocked and opened, and I was seriously told that any loud sound was not permitted in the prison. Then I took to acting. *Faust* was my favourite, and I know at present almost the whole of it by heart in the original. I believe that many a time the sentinel, watching me through the glazed aperture in the door (with a shutter outside),

and seeing me gesticulating and posing, took me for a madman. But I had to recite my soliloquies in a whisper only, and this so tired my throat that it became sore."

At last, after sixteen months in the fortress, and after two medical examinations, the prisoner was transferred to the House of Preliminary Detention. This, however, proved to be already full, so it was resolved to let Rosenbaum spend a few months somewhere in the country, to gain some strength before being exiled to the Yakutsk province.

At last Rosenbaum was ordered to be sent by *étape* * to Tchernigov, to remain there under surveillance until his health was recovered sufficiently to allow of his deportation. First, he was taken to the Forwarding Prison, where the parties are made up at intervals. A ten days' wait was necessary in this instance. "I was first placed," Rosenbaum says, "in a solitary cell which was only some three and a half by four and a half paces across. Later I was put into a large room, in which the door was replaced by a grating giving into the

* This barbarous method of conveying prisoners to their destination in gangs under escort from one gaol to another is described by a former political suspect in a pamphlet published by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, under the title "A Journey by *Étape*." The narrative ends thus: "Just three months had passed since our arrest. Ordinary travellers made this journey in five days, and we in three terrible months; and, indeed, it was only by good fortune that we reached our destination alive at all. We were so changed and emaciated that our relations stared at us in horror and could not listen to the story of our journey without tears. *And all this was inflicted upon peaceable Russian subjects, among whom were men of University education, doctors, lawyers, etc., simply because his Majesty the Emperor intended to pass through Tiflis*—though, after all, he never came." This journey was in the summer of 1888; but most of the essential features of the system are the same to-day. If the route has neither a railway nor a steamer line, the prisoners of "unprivileged birth"—those not belonging to the classes of nobility, clergy, or notables—have to march on foot, one or more carts being provided to carry the sick and infirm, the "privileged," and the property of the whole party.

prison chapel. A strange sight was presented by this place of worship of the God of Love and Mercy during the service. The first rows of worshippers were filled with the prison authorities—the corpulent, dark, good-natured chief of the jail, with his family; his thin, bilious-looking assistant, some warders, all in glittering uniform, with jingling, deadly weapons of all kinds, praying to the meek, all-pardoning, loving Christ. Then came the main grey mass of the prisoners, the half-shaven heads and chins of many of them, the emaciated little faces of children, arrested for beggary or trifling theft and now sent away to their respective homes, or to other places of detention, in striking contrast with the glittering silver and gold and the elaborate decorations of the church. The priest preached a sermon after the liturgy was over. He had no other consolation to give, or principle to implant in his flock, than a few platitudes on the duty of every one to bear obedience to the powers that be. Every day the Forwarding Prison either received or sent away prisoners—resembling a constantly boiling kettle of human life. I cannot find words to express the painful impression which the constant humming and bubble of this bee-hive made on my nerves, accustomed to the tomb-like silence of the fortress. I was allowed a double time for exercise in the courtyard; I had a walk by myself as a political prisoner, and another given to the sick, in company with the common offenders and criminals. Among the latter I remembered a native of Lithuania, who lacked many teeth. He explained to me that they had been broken by the police at Mitau, by whom he was mercilessly beaten." Some of his fellow-prisoners were simply being taken to their homes in the country, "this being the favourite means of the administration for clearing the capital of unemployed." He was

PRISONERS AND THEIR FRIENDS (MEN'S WARD). [*Pasternak.*

From Mrs. Maude's Edition of "Resurrection."

pleasantly surprised to find that the "politicals" were understood and esteemed, and that the revolutionary propaganda was spreading, even among the most lowly classes, one of the prisoners, for instance, quoting a clandestine organ *Rabochya Misl* (*The Workers' Thought*). One of the party was a woman who had lived for two years in man's dress doing man's work and was now unemployed.

At last the start was made. Vilna was reached after a night in a crowded railway-carriage. He thus describes the local Forwarding Prison: "It was formerly a convent, and has not been improved since. A quite drunken old warder opened the gate, and led us into a cold, damp room, which looked like a cellar. The formalities and the searching of each prisoner were exceedingly long and tiring. At last we were taken to a long narrow cell, which was almost wholly occupied by a sleeping-platform made of boards, with no trace of a sheet, mattress, pillow, or blanket on it. The room was very dimly lit by a lamp hanging from the ceiling, which smoked horribly. The walls were black with filth, and reeking with damp. In the narrow passage left by the platform stood a tub, which filled the room with an unbearable stench. The platform was occupied by sitting and reclining prisoners, and we, the new comers, had to fight to get places. But for the friendly assistance of a very good-natured fellow with powerful fists, who was being deported for robbery, and took a fancy to me, I should certainly have been left without any plank to lie upon. The place looked like pandemonium, and this impression was greatly strengthened by a strange figure crouched on the floor before the stove. The head of this creature was invisible, as it was covered with a large pointed felt hat, which went down to the shoulders. Three apertures were torn in

it for the mouth and eyes, and these eyes, black and glowing, and two rows of small, white teeth, blinked every now and then through the holes. This strange creature was constantly muttering something in Polish, which seemed to be prayers; then, at intervals, he put his hands to his chest and yelled wildly. A well-dressed young prisoner, with all the appearance of a smart sharper, who seemed to be the despot of the place, snatched the felt hat from the unfortunate creature's head, and gave him a cuff on the neck. Several of the weaker characters indulged in a subservient laugh. I protested against this idiotic ill-treatment, and as the fists of my friend the robber were on my side the unfortunate madman was left alone. He was doubtless mad; the only question was whether he was arrested while already insane, or had gone mad under arrest.

"The gangs of prisoners sent off by *étape* were formed in the Vilna prison once a fortnight, and started on Sundays. So, on the preceding Friday, the jail began to overflow with fresh parties of prisoners arriving. I had the works of Lermontov with me, and read a good deal of his heavenly poetry to some of these uneducated, depraved, and apparently coarse men. It was touching and striking to watch the effect of the music of Lermontov's verse, and of his noble thought and fiery feeling, on them. They implored me to leave them the book, and I did so. On Saturday some more people arrived, and the overcrowding became indescribable. Suffice it to say that, into the room formerly occupied by myself and my fellow-prisoner, on the door of which there was a notice that it contained nine cubic fathoms of air (and what air!), sixty-four persons were now squeezed!

"At last Sunday came, and I had to leave this truly mediæval prison. From Vilna to Minsk I had to

travel in a separate railway-carriage in company with six 'political' Jews, four of whom were being transported to Siberia, workmen employed in tanning. One of these was a man of Herculean build and strength. The whole company were being exiled for having instigated or taken part in strikes, but the modern Samson, who was accompanied by his wife, was also charged with very rough handling of some spies. The tanners told me that they were escorted in Vilna from the prison to the railway-station by an enormous convoy of police and gendarmes to prevent demonstrations in their honour, as such demonstrations had already occurred on behalf of other political prisoners; and this I quite believed, because, when our train stopped at a small place not far from Vilna, we found some fifteen tanners from a neighbouring tannery already waiting for the exiles, whom they greeted with cheers and waiving of handkerchiefs.

"Down to the little town of Gorodnya we went by rail, and I cannot describe the disgusting scenes of obscenity openly perpetrated in the carriage. In Gorodnya I passed the night, and had a glimpse of three workmen incarcerated for trade-unionist activity, who were treated in the most shameful manner. Next morning I started for Tchernigov, together with three common prisoners, one of whom was a peasant woman condemned to seventeen years' hard labour for the murder of her husband. Her good-natured face, and the truth that unwittingly leaked out through her own narrative, proved clearly that the murder had been committed by her lover, but that she had taken the guilt on herself to save him. My other fellow-prisoner was a boy, who was being sent to the reformatory colony for having stolen some pens. The third person was a dissenter, of the type called 'Old Believers,'

who was being sent to the infirmary for the state of his mind to be inquired into, because he had presented the Dowager Empress with a petition. This petition, which consisted of twelve foolscap pages, he wrote in the Slavonic character, the only writing he had learned to understand while in prison. The knowledge of the law exhibited by this almost illiterate man was really astonishing.

"There was no railway line between Gorodnya and Tchernigov, so we had to travel in the apostolic way. We had a peasant cart with us, which went slowly, so as to keep pace with the marching convoy. But I preferred exercise, and so walked almost all the way. The snow was sufficiently strong to bear the weight of a man, and I marched cheerfully along, greedily inhaling the bracing air, and feeling that every breath brought strength and energy to my soul and body."

Rosenbaum reached his place of detention on March 8–21, 1900, and almost immediately began to plan his escape. The difficulty was that he was closely watched and had to report himself regularly to the police. After two months, however, he left Tchernigov, stayed for some time in the country far from the frontier while the hue and cry subsided, and then, with the aid of an "emigration agent" and a false passport, succeeded, after a series of adventures too lengthy to recount here, in crossing the German-Polish frontier.

In these experiences of a man whose crime consisted in introducing into Russia one trunk and two portmanteaus, all with double sides, tops, and bottoms, containing about sixty-five pounds' weight of prohibited or suspected literature, may be seen imperfectly reflected some of the grossest vices of the Russian penal system: the denial of personal rights; the pain of long solitude, on the one hand, and of overcrowding, filth,

and promiscuity on the other; the moral torture of repeated secret inquisitions; the threat of distant exile or a worse fate. Imagine the lot of a woman—and there have been many—subjected to such tortures. It is even worse for the workman who, as one of the "unprivileged" class, is treated with least ceremony. In a letter, published in May, 1900, by the "Political Red Cross" (a secret benevolent society for the help of political prisoners and exiles), a factory worker who suffered for participation in a strike thus describes his experiences:—

"The first three days after my arrest I was allowed no books. I was searched throughout, my mouth, nostrils, ears, hair, nails, and other parts of my body were investigated. It was a revolting performance, but they made their excursions so promptly and unexpectedly that I could do nothing to prevent it. Then I was told that the rules of the prison forbade any singing, whistling, loud talking, tearing bits of paper out of books, or writing in them (one of the usual ways of intercommunication between solitary prisoners). In case of infringing one of these rules, punishment will follow, in the form of deprivation of out-door walks, then incarceration in a penitentiary cell, and then something still more severe (*i.e.* flogging). On the fourth day I was given a New Testament, while, in a week, the colonel of gendarmes visited me, and, at the same time, I was allowed to read other books. The colonel asked me, 'What is the reason of thy arrest?' I replied that he knew it better than myself; 'I do not know it.' 'Ah! indeed! Is it so?' he began to shout at the top of his voice, stamping his feet at me. 'Only criminals are being incarcerated here, and we keep them here to squeeze the hidden truth out of them,' he went on. Interrogations are often conducted

in the cell; it may be in the morning, during the day, or late at night, so that one is in constant strain, in constant expectation, both in daytime and at night, that the colonel may intrude and begin his tyrannizing work. The nervous system gets very much upset, and one is on the verge of hallucinations." All this was, however, only a prelude.

Soon the authorities found out that their victim was greatly attached to his old mother. For eight months they denied her an interview with him, representing that her boy, by his obstinacy, was bringing misery on himself and his family, till she began to write him most distressing letters. "What is to become of us?" she wrote; "we have no money, no bread, no boots, and we are being turned out of our lodgings." All these reproaches were the more heartrending in that they were intermingled with expressions of tender love. The prisoner wrote back to his mother that she should take heart, that a man has some higher duties than to keep up personal comforts, namely, to serve his country and the whole of humanity. One day the mother was brought to the prison, but her son still refused to betray his cause and his comrades. He was then removed to a penitentiary cell, which he thus describes: "A very small cell, absolutely dark, with cold brick walls and floor; the bed has protruding nail-heads of the size of nuts all over; although the room is heated twice a day, it is cold, because the warming arrangements are such that only the ceiling is heated. If one stands up with one's feet on the bed, one's head is burning, while his back, hands, and feet are bitterly cold. It is impossible to sit against the wall or lie down on the floor because of the cold. To lie on the bed is also impracticable because of the nails. So one is compelled to walk; but to do this in absolute darkness is likewise beyond human

possibility; you may pace the floor once, then you miss the direction and knock your head against the wall or your leg against the bedstead."

These are, as we should say, normal, even fortunate instances; really, under the rule of oligarchy it is caprice and accident more even than injustice and brutality that are normal conditions of the punitive and "preventive" system. A case which roused the dull mind of Moscow nearly ten years ago remains thoroughly typical of what may happen at any time in any town of the Empire. In the summer of 1895 wholesale arrests were made as a result of the University troubles. One of those thrown into prison was a young, hard-working, and highly nervous girl, Angela Karpouzi, a student in the classes for medical assistants. She had nothing to do with the revolutionary movement; but one of her friends was concerned in the agitation.

The search, arrest, and imprisonment had a most painful and depressing effect on her. Her nervousness increased, she got into a state of constant restlessness. Week after week passed without her being summoned to an inquiry; the gendarmes, having nothing with which to charge her, had simply forgotten her existence. But she probably knew some of the well-attested cases in which girls and women, unjustly arrested, were terrorized by officers of the character of General Strelnikov, and she came to the conclusion that they wanted to bury her in gaol till she became weak enough to incriminate her friends. This fear, working on an excitable imagination and nervous nature, in the unhealthy surroundings of the gaol, resulted at last in a real mental disease. One night the poor girl awoke, thinking that she heard horrible cries, and that she recognized the voice of a girl friend. It was an hallucination, but to the unfortunate prisoner it conveyed the

blackest meaning; and she resolved not to sleep any more, from fear of being hypnotized when asleep. She walked about her cell all that night, and then she refused to take food. In a forgotten cell of a Moscow prison this poor victim of the Tsardom was tortured day and night by most horrible imaginings. She thought she saw her brother being taken to the gallows, her friends being put to the rack. At times she shrieked and implored help in a loud voice. The sentinel or warder would peep in through the aperture in the cell door characteristically called the "Judas." But, as "the young lady did no harm," they left her alone. It was "nobody's business." At last she decided to end her misery. She put everything in order in her cell, sat down on her bed, covered her head with a shawl, and taking the cover of a tin kettle, began to cut at her wrist, trying to open the artery. Then she tore at her flesh with a metal comb. At last blood poured out, staining her skirt and shawl, and she fainted. All this was at night, and when she awoke from the frightful pain in her hand, it was already day. Again she seized the comb, but this time the warder's eye was indeed at the "Judas." The door of her cell was hastily opened, the girl seized, the comb wrenched from her hand, a doctor summoned, and her wrist bandaged.

Soon afterwards, the governor came and told her that she would be immediately taken to the inquiry. She had believed she was herself to be hanged; and when asked by the officials to put in writing her name and other usual official particulars with which an inquiry begins, asked, "Why cannot I be hanged without this?" This made a sensation, but when the authorities looked at her signature the sensation became still greater, for it was seen that she had muddled up all the letters. The Crown Attorney ordered a cup of

tea to be brought for her; but she only asked whether she was to be poisoned instead of being hanged, as all her friends and relatives had been. Still they tried to subject her to an examination, but she made no reply to any questions. Seeing at last that they had to do with one whose mind was hopelessly deranged, the authorities decided to abandon the attempt. A cab was called, the cabman told the address of the unfortunate girl's former lodgings, and she was set free. The landlady of the rooms sent at once for her brother, and she was then placed in the care of a well-known Russian specialist in lunacy, Dr. Korsakov, who took much pains in collecting evidence as to the case.

The head-quarters of the Moscow espionage (*Okhrannoe Otdelénie*) for some time refused the necessary permit to leave the city, insisting that the insane girl should call for it in person. At last, she was allowed to go to the South of Russia. In the town of Novorossysk, where she settled, she would probably have completely recovered; but as soon as the police noticed the improvement, she was summoned to answer inquisitorial questions, and her mania returned. She then disappeared, whither my informants do not know.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD BASTILLE

SOME day, when the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul falls into the hands of the representatives of the Russian people, the ill-fame of the Bastille of Paris will be forgotten amid the shout of execration with which the records of this Imperial dungeon will be received. Here the Decembrist leaders were buried, and, after them, many of the leaders of the revolutionary movement of the seventies. Kropotkin has written of it at this period from personal experience, Stepniak and Kennan from masses of first-hand evidence. I shall not attempt to retrace the ground they have covered, or even to print in full the experiences of friends who have suffered there in recent years. I am assured that Prince Kropotkin's words are still fully applicable: the fortress is "a true grave, where the prisoner hears no human voice and sees no human being, except two or three gaolers, deaf and mute when addressed by the prisoners. You never hear a sound, excepting that of a sentry continually creeping like a hunter from one door to another to look through the 'Judas' into the cells. You are never alone, an eye is continually kept upon you; and yet you are always alone. If you address a word to the warder who brings you your dress for walking in the yard, if you ask him what is the weather, he never answers. The only human being

with whom I exchanged a few words every morning was the Colonel who came to write down what I had to buy—tobacco or paper. But he never dared to enter into conversation, as he himself was always watched by some of the warders. The absolute silence is interrupted only by the bells of the clock which ring a change every quarter of an hour, each hour a canticle, and each twelve hours 'God Save the Tsar.' In addition to all this, the cacophony of the discordant bells is horrible during rapid changes of temperature, and I do not wonder that nervous persons consider these bells as one of the plagues of the fortress. Half of the prisoners there have been arrested on a simple denunciation of a spy, or as mere acquaintances of revolutionists; and half of them, after having been kept for years, will not even be brought before a court, or, if brought, will be acquitted, and—as was the case in the trial of the 193—thereupon sent to Siberia, or to some hamlet on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, by a simple order of the administration. The inquiry is pursued in secrecy, and nobody knows how long it will last, which law will be applied (the common or the martial), what will be the fate of the prisoner. He may be acquitted, but also he may be hung. No counsel is allowed during the inquiry, no conversation, no correspondence with relations about the circumstances which led to the arrest. During all this exceedingly long time, no occupation is allowed to the prisoners. As to workmen and peasants, to keep them without any occupation is merely to bring them to despair. Hence the great proportion of cases of insanity."

It is believed that, since August, 1884, the fortress has been used only for preliminary, not for permanent, detention, but this may be a lengthy process. With Maxim Gorky, last winter—watched by the whole world—it lasted only two months; with Dr. Soskice, the

barrister and author whose story will be found in a later chapter, it lasted a year; with Leo Tessler, arrested in 1889, and Moses Lurie, in 1901—both hereafter referred to—it lasted twenty-six and twenty-five months respectively. The fact is that the police are at their wits' end to find prison-room, in spite of the millions spent in recent years on new buildings, and so have been compelled to use an ancient bagnio, the very name of which is a synonym for all the crimes a tyrannical government can inflict upon its most helpless and most enlightened subjects.

"Those who have never undergone anything like solitary confinement," writes a friend who suffered a long term of incarceration in the Petropavlovsk fortress, "can hardly realize what torture it involves. The long confinement of an invalid to his bed or chair has been repeatedly described as one of the greatest calamities a human being can experience. And such it is. But in this our misfortune we are mostly cared for. A solitary prisoner is carefully deprived of all relief, while the feeling of dependence, helplessness, and uselessness, which is the greatest of the trials of an invalid, is further aggravated by the feeling of injustice and humiliation. All occupation, all the little duties, necessities, and cares of everyday life, which take up so much of our time, being systematically withheld from the prisoner, he is left helpless in the power of his imagination. In the case of 'preliminary' detention, an additional torture besets the victim under investigation; he or she feels himself or herself in the position of a hunted beast, and strains every nerve not to be betrayed into injuring by a chance word some innocent person. Is it surprising, then, that cases of suicide and madness are so frequent among Russian political prisoners? The statistics on this subject are carefully

withheld by the Russian Government, but at times private effort brings to light a significant fragment of them. In the autumn of the year 1898, 150 political prisoners were known to have been immured in St. Petersburg (117 men and 33 women); of these, six persons were confined in the Hospital of St. Nicholas, which is an hospital for mental diseases. So that is what the "political inquiry" comes to: it drives 4 per cent. of the political suspects—mind you, *suspects* only, persons who may yet turn out to be innocent, even from the official point of view—into the madhouse."

And still there are deeper depths to penetrate. Some of my readers may remember that one of the recent battues in the capital arose through the disturbance by the police and cossacks of a peaceful celebration of the anniversary of the death of a girl named Vetrova, whose right to fame lay in her mysterious disappearance and death in the fortress beside the Neva. I am indebted to Mr. Felix Volkhovsky for a fuller statement of the facts of this tragic affair than has yet appeared in English.

"Marie Vetrova was a student of the St. Petersburg higher educational courses for women, twenty-five years old. She was much liked by her fellow-students for her straightforward, energetic, and bright character. She was the daughter of a peasant woman in the South of Russia, her babyhood being spent in a tiny peasant cottage. While only five or six years of age, she was placed in an orphan's asylum. The matron, noticing the child's ability and brightness, helped her to enter the provincial middle school. From her fourteenth year, however, Miss Vetrova had to maintain herself by her own work, learning and coaching others at the same time. In 1888 she graduated and became a teacher in a primary school in the country. During this time she

kept a diary, and from her notes one sees how earnestly and even painfully she strove after self-improvement. In 1890 she came upon Tolstoy's essay, 'What is happiness?' which made a great impression on her. She entered in her diary this remark: 'Yes; happiness consists in the fulfilment of Christ's teaching. Tolstoy is right, and I thank him for this truth! Well, then, to live for others, that's it.' She began to read feverishly. Extracts and abstracts from Pisarev, Macaulay, Schopenhauer, the great Russian critic Mikhailovsky, Herbert Spencer, Dobrolubov fill up the pages of her note-book. But she felt the need of more regular tuition, and all kinds of hindrances, put in her way as a teacher by official suspicion or unscrupulousness, were developing grave doubts as to whether her occupation really did any good, whether it meant 'living for others' in the right sense.

"At the same time heavy bereavements began to visit her. Two of her friends had been arrested; in 1893 a third was incarcerated—all of them on 'political' suspicion, of course. On what suspicion? We do not know. We only know that neither in Lubeck nor in Azov, where Vetrova was successively a teacher till the year 1894, had any 'political affair' of any note happened at this time. The salaries of Russian elementary teachers are beggarly. Their position is that of individuals whom every Jack-in-office, however insignificant be his position, may treat, and almost invariably does, with suspicion and contempt. Yet we do not find any complaints or invectives in the whole of Vetrova's diary. Only once does she write down a phrase which reveals at once the conditions in which she lived, and this is not in the form of an indictment of any one. She simply exclaims, 'It is horrible; soon I shall have nothing to eat!' Neither poverty, nor professional

work, nor personal trials quenched, however, her thirst for enlightenment; and, in 1894, we see her in St. Petersburg as a student of the higher educational courses. People who knew the deceased girl assert that she took no active part in what is known in Russia as revolutionary work, but that she was a reader of clandestine literature, and did take part in helping the strikers in the summer of 1896.

"She was, however, accused of having had some connection with a group of the 'Party of The People's Will' (*Narodnaya Volya*), whose secret printing-office was seized near St. Petersburg in July, 1896. On January 4, 1897, she was arrested and imprisoned in the House of Preliminary Detention, and in a month transferred to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. What the reason of this removal of the prisoner was, no one knows. On January 18, or about that date, Marie's sister, who came expressly from the South to see her, was told by the gendarmes that no heavy punishment awaited the prisoner, and that she would be liberated soon. General Zvoliansky, the Director of the Police Department, speaking to Miss Vetrova's friend long after that removal, said the same, adding that the severest measure which threatened Marie was her being turned out from St. Petersburg and sent home to her mother's. So Vetrova's transfer to the fortress was not one of those measures of greater isolation or additional precaution against escape, which are usually thought necessary with regard to serious offenders. What was it, then?

"Whatever it was, Miss Vetrova was kept in complete isolation till February 22, when, after a visit to her cell by the Assistant Procuror of the St. Petersburg Court of Appeal, Kichin (which visit lasted four hours, no witnesses being present), heart-rending shrieks were

heard from the cell. On February 24 Marie died; nevertheless, a comrade of hers, to whom an interview had been promised, brought books and money for her, and both were accepted as if the prisoner were still alive. On March 10 this student was told that Miss Vetrova had no need of anything at all, but the fact of her death was still concealed. It was not until some of the other prisoners in the St. Petersburg fortress, who had heard the shrieks of Vetrova, were being transferred to the House of Preliminary Detention, that the fact that something awful had happened to the girl leaked out. Nothing definite was, however, yet known, and the authorities were very naturally besieged with questions, and began an ignoble play on the patience and credulity of the deceased's friends. The Commandant of the fortress would direct the inquirers to the head-quarters of the *gendarmérie;* that office would direct them to the Department of Police; and the Director of that Department again to the Commandant.

"At last, on March 12, Zvoliansky said to a friend of the deceased: 'An unfortunate accident befell poor Vetrova; she poured (*vylila*, spilt, or poured) on herself some burning kerosine oil from the lamp a few minutes after the gendarme who brought it left the cell. . . . She could not stand the extreme suffering, as the wounds on the body were too deep, and further——' Here the Director of the Police Department suddenly stopped his explanations. He made another pronouncement later on, when the rumours about the unfortunate girl having been the victim of a heinous crime by either Kichin or the gendarme reached him. 'Nothing of the kind ever happened,' protested Zvoliansky; 'but, of late, Vetrova was subject to hallucinations of having been violated.' At the same time, Prince Meschersky,

that unprincipled mouthpiece of certain spheres of Russian officialdom, printed in his organ, *Grazhdanin*, a note about a girl-prisoner having committed suicide, 'to which no clue can be found in the circumstances surrounding her.'

"This is, in fact, all we know about this horror. Was it really suicide, or was it a partly abortive (because not sudden) murder, committed to conceal a still more godless crime? If it was really an attempt at suicide from motives for which the authorities were not responsible, why did they not call some of her friends to her bedside during the two days which passed from the moment of the burning till death? Instead of that, they used every device to conceal the very fact of their victim's death for full sixteen days, that is, until the mutilated body was already buried, and all traces that might lead to the explanation of the mystery effaced. They concealed the very burial-place of the unfortunate girl's remains; so there was something to be concealed. Whether it was a matter of physical torture and insult (the deceased complained once to her sister that at the inquiries she was made to feel her social position as a peasant girl, and peasants are liable to being flogged), or whether it was a matter of fiendish lust—in any case, the very possibility of such lawlessness, of such cheapness of everything that is sacred to man, and the thought of the unbearable anguish which had led the girl to so atrocious a death, if it was suicide, makes one shiver with horror."

CHAPTER VI

ANNALS OF SCHLUSSELBURG

SINCE the active period of the earlier revolutionary movement, many of the gravest political cases have been sent to the ancient and inaccessible castle-prison of Schlusselburg, forty miles away from the capital, on an island at the source of the Neva in Lake Ladoga. For long no voice ever reached the outer world from this place of living burial, for those incarcerated there are never allowed to see their relatives; twice a year, through the intermediary of their guards, they are allowed to exchange a few colourless lines with their relations, no references to the prison being allowed; and no money, food, or other articles can be received from outside. The very soldiers are themselves prisoners; and with this gaol, alone among those of the Empire, the revolutionists have never been able to open secret communication. Thus Schlusselburg is hardly mentioned in the books of Kropotkin, Stepniak, and Kennan. In 1897, however, of the twenty-four revolutionists then known to be immured there (many of whom had been there for fourteen years) eight were removed, three as insane, the rest to various far-removed places of exile; another was removed in 1902, and three more last autumn; and on each occasion a little has been added to our knowledge of the secrets of this horrible dungeon. Eleven

or twelve political prisoners, at least, still remained in December, 1904, one of these having been in the fortress for twenty-six years.

Instead of attempting to describe the conditions that have prevailed, and now prevail, at Schlusselburg,* I will lay before the reader a very brief statement of the fifty-four cases some particulars of which I have obtained. Of these, two men were shot in the prison; four committed suicide; six were already, or became, insane, at least one of whom is dead; twenty died otherwise in the fortress; ten were removed into exile, of whom three have since committed suicide; and twelve are believed to be still alive in confinement.

In most of these cases, let me say at once, there was no question of a complete "miscarriage of justice" in the ordinary sense. True, there was generally no pretence of legality in the business of arrest, "trial," and sentence—had this elementary right existed, there would have been no such extremes in the revolutionary movement as are illustrated in this record. Most of these, however, were at least real revolutionists, and not purely accidental victims of the Tsardom, like Angela Karpouzi or Marie Vetrova. But they were political offenders, sacrificing themselves for a public ideal, and the tortures to which these educated and sensitive men and women were put are sufficiently indicated by the summary figures just given.

The first of this appalling list of victims dates from the short terrorist period of the revolutionary movement of the later seventies and early eighties. Either in 1883 or shortly afterwards, Kolotkevich, Teterka, Telalov, Langhans, and Kletochnikov died in the hands

* For the illegality of the imprisonment in some of the following cases, see the letter of P. Polivanov, addressed in 1903 to the then Minister of Justice, N. V. Muraviev, *Times*, August 21; *Free Russia*, October, 1903.

of their gaolers, the last-named by deliberate starvation. Of these the first-named was condemned to death in April, 1882, in what was known as the "Trial of the Twenty." Teterka was one of the Tsaricides, and took part in one of the abortive attempts on the life of Alexander II. Nicholas Kletochnikov, famous as the "counter spy," was one of the ablest and most daring of the conspirators. For a long time he maintained his position as a copyist in the "Third Section" conveying the information of the secret police to his revolutionary colleagues. At length he was discovered, and was arrested on January 28, 1881, at the house of his friend Alexander Barannikov. The latter had been seized the day before, and died in Schlusselburg in 1884. In the same year Alexander Mikhailov, one of the same group, and for several years the virtual leader of the party, died, and Ivan Uvachev became insane. The last-named was an ensign in the army, and was condemned, in the "Trial of the Fourteen," along with Baron von Stromberg and Lieutenant Rogachev, who were executed, Colonel Aschenbrenner, Captain Pohitonov, Second Lieutenant Alex. Tikhonovich, Vera Figner, and Ludmilla Volkenstein. In 1884 George Minokov, hoping thus to obtain permission to have books and tobacco, refused to take food, and, when fed by force, struck the prison doctor in the face. For this "breach of discipline" he was shot. In the same year Klimenko and the above-named Tikhonovich committed suicide by hanging. In 1885 Malavsky, Dolgushin, Boutsevich, and S. Zlatopolsky died. Dolgushin was one of the first of the revolutionary propagandists, and formed an active group, which became concerned in Degayev's conspiracy, and was extinguished by the police. Boutsevich, an Army officer, was arrested with Gratchevsky and Madame

Korba in June, 1882, after the discovery of a dynamite laboratory in St. Petersburg by the famous detective, Sudyekin. Zlatopolsky was concerned at Odessa in one of the plots against Alexander II., was imprisoned in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, removed to the Kara mines in 1883 to serve twenty years' penal servitude, and brought back thence to Schlusselburg.

At this point the record is affected by a backwash from the great stream of Siberian exile that reached its height about this time. Hypolite Myshkin was one of the most extraordinary figures of the "Nihilist" movement, a man whose adventures would alone fill a substantial volume. His bold attempt to rescue Tchernichevsky from his place of exile in Siberia has been narrated by Mr. Kennan. After three years awaiting trial in the Trubetskoy ravelin of the St. Petersburg fortress, he was at last brought up, in October, 1878, in the "Trial of the 193," of which something is said in a later chapter. He was first sent to the Kharkov central prison, then to hard labour in the Kara mines. In April, 1882, with a companion, he escaped from the Kara prison * and succeeded in reaching Vladivostok, over 1000 miles away, but was recaptured and brought back in handcuffs and leg-fetters. He was one of the victims of the unprovoked and ruffianly attack on the inmates of the Kara political prison on May 11, 1882. On July 6, eight other "politicals," regarded as specially dangerous—Malavsky (named above) and Hellis, Kobyliansky, Boutsinsky, Voloshenko, Paul Orloff, Popoff, and Shchedrin—were sent back from Kara, and imprisoned in Schlusselburg. Myshkin followed these in the following year. In the autumn of 1885, believing that he was on the verge of insanity, and in the hope

* Kennan: "Siberia and the Exile System," ii. pp. 229-233, etc.

either that he might receive public trial or that he might at once be put out of his agony, he struck one of the prison warders. He was then promptly court-martialled and shot. In 1886 the above-named Kobyliansky and Hellis died in the fortress. Mr. Kennan met the wife of the latter during his Siberian journey, and found that she had been refused a last interview with her husband on his leaving Kara, and did not know what had become of him, even whether he was alive or dead. Shchedrin, who, as Mme. Kovalsky narrates in a later chapter, was brought to Schlusselburg from Kara still chained to his wheel-barrow, became insane during this year; and there also died Nemolovsky, Issayev, and Alexander Ivanov.

In 1887 Mikhail Grachevsky struck the prison doctor, and, this proving ineffectual, refused to take food for twenty days, becoming insane. At length he poured the oil from the lamp of his cell on his bed, lay on it, deliberately set fire to it, and was burned to death. Formerly a railway mechanic, he had become one of the best known figures in the revolutionary movement. He was arrested on suspicion as a propagandist in 1875, suffered over two years of "preventive detention," and when at last brought to trial was acquitted. Turning again to his occupation of railway mechanic, he was again arrested at Odessa, without having committed any fresh offence, and exiled by administrative order to Pinyega in the extreme north. It was an experience like this that turned many innocent missionaries of the vague socialism then prevalent into determined revolutionists. After a year of exile, in September, 1879, Grachevsky decided to attempt an escape, braving the dangers of the hundreds of miles of virgin forest which lay between him and the struggle for liberty that he was now determined fully

to share. Compass in hand, he made his way with increasing difficulty, and at last, driven with hunger, ran into the hands of some village police. Soon he escaped again, however, and this time, after having hidden awhile in Archangel, he succeeded in reaching Moscow. In 1882 he was again arrested in St. Petersburg, was tried and condemned to death, but the penalty was commuted to imprisonment for life in Schlusselburg.

In 1888 Ury Boghdanovich and Aronchik, the latter after being paralyzed for four years, died in the fortress. In 1889 Ludwig Varinsky died, and Konashevich, one of the accused in the Sudyekin trial of two years earlier, became insane. In 1891 Boutsinsky, one of the Kara convicts, died, and one of the most striking of the many striking women I shall have to name took her life after only six months' detention.

Sophia Ginsburg was one of the later terrorists. Dynamite, as we shall see presently, played but a small part for a short period in the movement of revolt of which the more characteristic, and in the long run more effective, weapon was the secret press. In the autumn of 1884, and again in 1886, dynamite factories were discovered on Russian soil, and in 1887 an abortive attempt was made upon the life of Alexander III. on his way to the Petropavlovsk Cathedral to celebrate the anniversary of the death of his father. This was followed by the making of more perfect missiles, first in Zurich, where the chief artisan killed himself in the process, and afterwards in Paris. It was in connection with this conspiracy, on the strength of "evidence" obtained in Paris by the French police—the immediate charge, however, being that of helping to draw up a revolutionary proclamation—that Sophia Ginsburg was arrested, secretly tried in November, 1890, along with

four other Russians—Stoinovsky, Freifeld, Dunshevsky and Crotchko—and, with the first two of these, condemned to death, while many others were seized and exiled without pretence of trial. "She is a girl of rare beauty, keen mind, careful education, and amazing enthusiasm," said one of the foreign correspondents, "all of which she sacrificed gladly to the cause of enlightening the poor and ignorant of her native land." The case of this girl of only twenty-one years old attracted much attention abroad, and meetings were held to petition for a modification of the sentence both in England and the United States, where ex-Presidents Cleveland and Hayes, the Mayor of New York and Governor of the State, Bishop Potter, and other well-known people gave their names to the effort. Bethinking them of the effect on the mind of the world of the execution of Sophia Perovsky, and perhaps in the hope of thus obtaining further information of the revolutionary organization, the Government committed Miss Ginsburg for life to Schlusselburg, where she killed herself with a blunt pair of scissors. "This young girl," wrote Stepniak, "was the creator and the inspirer of the society which collapsed so pitiably after she was arrested. Old people, broken down with disappointment and doubt, in contact with her forgot their scepticism, and, fired with her ardent faith, once more believed in those ideals of their youth which they had laid aside as empty dreams. Even her enemies bear witness to her tenderness of heart and her capacity for strong personal affection. Her self-inflicted death is in itself a proof of her care for others as well as of her courage. The inquiry has brought to light her acquaintance with an unknown man of good social position, formerly a revolutionist. It was he who wrote, at her request, the revolutionary proclamation which was the only material charge

D. ROGACHEV.

TUTCHEV.

VOINARALSKY.

ADRIAN MIKHAILOV.

BARON STROMBERG.

STEPHANOVITCH.

against her and her companions. No one ever saw this man; no one knew his name except Sophia, who absolutely refused to disclose it. But the Russian police will go to a great length to extort a secret of such importance. Sophia was not tortured; we are fully convinced of this. But besides acute physical torture there is moral torture, which is sometimes as effective, the torture of repeated interrogations, of threatening, cajoling, and harassing by disciplinary punishments. Few can stand this for long, and she was in the hands of her tormentors for life, with the burden of her fatal secret, terrified lest in sleep, in illness, in a fit of insanity, it might escape her. How many more of these martyrs of duty must follow her?"

In 1895 another Schlusselburg prisoner went mad—Captain Pohitonov, one of those condemned in the "Trial of Fourteen." An exceptional case was that of Alexander Lagovsky, who, having escaped from exile in Siberia, was remitted to Schlusselburg by simple "administrative order." In the following year, however, he was deported to Central Asia. In 1896 Yurkovsky, one of the Kara group, died in the fortress. During that or the following year five of the prisoners remaining were removed—Mme. Ludmilla Volkenstein to Sakhalin, and four men—Surovtsev, Martinov, Shebalin, and Yanovich—to the desolate north of the province of Yakutsk. Shebalin, condemned to penal servitude in Siberia with his wife for being found in possession of a secret printing-press, had been transferred from Moscow prison to Schlusselburg for a "breach of discipline" in resisting the shaving and fettering operation, which was usually deferred till the convicts reached a Siberian prison. "His young wife had scarcely parted from her husband when her child, an unweaned infant whom she had with her in prison, fell ill and died. She

herself succumbed to her grief and died in the Moscow prison."

Whether the above-named Martinov is the same whose pitiful story is told by Mr. Kennan (ii. 407) I do not know; but it is known that both he and Yanovich committed suicide in their place of exile. "We have repeatedly depicted the physical and mental hardships of exile life in those arctic regions," Felix Volkhovsky wrote in *Free Russia* on their removal. "There the struggle for a bare existence is hard enough even for a native savage, a Yakut, or Tunguz, who is trained to it, who has not got those mental and physical wants which are originated by culture. What must it be, then, to men whose vital forces have been systematically drained out of them by eleven, twelve, fourteen years of seclusion, inactivity, artificial surroundings, and constant trial of their nerves, not to count the effect of their 'preliminary detention.'" These sad words were indeed prophetic.

There were now known to remain in the castle-prison fifteen or sixteen "politicals," all of them sentenced for life, except Pankratiev, a comrade of Shebalin, and Trigoni, who was the most favourably situated, having only six years to serve after having been interned for fourteen years. Among the others were Mikhail Popov, one of the Kara group (he still survived in 1902); Morosov, imprisoned in 1880; Frolenko, Aschenbrenner, Vasil Ivanov, Vera Figner, Lopatin, Lukashevich, Novorusky, Antonov, S. Ivanov, and Starodvorsky. Among these are some of the most famous of the revolutionists of the last generation. Nicholas Lopatin, for instance, was first arrested in 1866, and exiled to Siberia, whence he escaped. In 1884 he was again arrested, tried in June, 1887,

* Leo Deutsch, "Sixteen Years in Siberia" (1903), p. 121.

and sent to Schlusselburg for life. Starodvorsky was the assassin of the great spy, Sudyekin. To the number of those just named has since been added P. V. Karpovich, who shot the Minister of Education, Bogolyepov, in 1902.

For some time nothing more was heard from Schlusselburg. At length, in 1902, Peter S. Polivanov, condemned to death in 1882 by a military court for an attempt to liberate the revolutionist Novitsky from the Saratov prison, and immured first in the Petropavlovsk fortress, and then in Schlusselburg, was removed to a place of exile in the wilderness of Yakutsk. He at once determined to escape, and with the aid of friends and a small sum voted by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, after various adventures, succeeded in reaching Switzerland and France, to be received by comrades of a new generation with open arms. A story based on his prison experiences, which may be published posthumously, gives some faint impression of what the past twenty years had meant for him. Mentally he was still active and determined, but physically he was at the end of his resources, and, as a friend wrote, "the more fully life took possession of him, the more mercilessly he realized that he was no longer fit for life." On August 17, 1903, he shot himself in a garden at Lorient, leaving a letter to his friends in which he said: "May you live to see the moment when the Autocracy that disgraces our country falls, and with it the evil it caused will come to an end. How much I wish to take part in the heroic fight for freedom, a fight not by means of speech only, but by deeds as well. But I am ruined physically. To live idle, outside the struggle, I cannot, and so I put an end to my life. Long live Liberty! Long live the Organization of Combat!"

Finally, in November, 1904, Schlusselburg gave up

three more of its victims—Mme Figner-Philipova, Col. Aschenbrenner, and Vasil Ivanov. The first-named, who entered the castle as a beautiful girl, is described on leaving it, after twenty years of solitary confinement, as "a bowed and trembling old woman, suffering from rheumatism and scurvy, so frequently induced by Russian prison life, and from the pitiful complaint known as 'agoraphobia,' the fear of open spaces."* It is stated that the late M. Plehve refused to release her at the proper time, two years earlier, on the ground that it would be "a danger to the State, there being still too much life in her." Papers written by her in the fortress were burned. From Schlusselburg she was taken to the Petropavlovsk fortress, and thence to the town of Archangel, to be detained in the town prison till the roads were in a condition to permit of her being taken to a remote village in the same province, designed for her place of exile.

Vera Figner, to use her better-known maiden name, comes, like several of her former comrades in the revolutionary movement, of the old nobility of Russia, and her grandfather was a distinguished general in the Napoleonic campaign. Born in the province of Kazan, and educated for a brilliant position in society, she was too intelligent and sympathetic to ignore the troubles of her poorer countrymen, and the disappointment of the reaction that followed the short epoch of reforms under Alexander II. But her first ideas were only to educate herself more really, and to help others to gain the education which was necessary to any true happiness and progress. In 1872, with her elder sister, she went to Zurich to study there, more advantageously than was possible at home, the natural sciences; and there she came into contact with the individualist-peasantists

* *Free Russia*, Dec., 1904; also *La Tribune Russe*, Nos. 22, 23.

N. LOPATIN.

VERA FIGNER.

HYPOLITE MYSHKIN.

N. SHCHEDRIN.

DOLGUSHIN.

P. S. POLIVANOV.

grouped round Bakunin, and the Marxian propagandists who regarded Peter Lavrov as their teacher and his review *Vpered* (*Forward!*) as their organ. Sectarian contentions did not appeal to this fine-minded and practical woman, but when her sister Lydia was arrested, along with Sophia Bardina and other missionaries of a mild radicalism whom she had met, and cast into prison; when she witnessed the agony of these gentle and self-sacrificing souls, immured for three or four years before being brought to trial, and then punished with a ruthless severity, the appeal of humanity to her very human heart became too strong to be longer resisted. Still, however, she only joined a secret benevolent society, the so-called Political Red Cross, whose object was to provide such small succour as was possible to the political offenders with whom every jail in the land was being crowded. Means were not lacking, for Russian society has never grudged indirect help to the revolutionists, if its open co-operation has been little and uncertain; but the collection of funds had to be carried on secretly, and yet on a large scale. This lasted through 1875 and 1876, and then, after having, in the following year, accompanied her sister to Siberia, she definitely joined the revolutionary movement, but still only in its innocent apostolate "to the people." Having passed the necessary examinations, she sought employment in the country as a medical assistant with the object of carrying on clandestinely the forbidden attempt to teach the workmen and peasants the elements of scientific and political knowledge. Soon she was obliged to evade the police, so becoming illegal, and frequently to change her residence. In 1879 she joined the "Zemlya i Volya" ("Land and Liberty") group, and took part in the famous Voronezh congress, where, with a few others, she attempted to reconcile the

harried "propagandists" and the new "terrorist" section. When division became inevitable, however, this gentlewoman, who had lived for four years with increasing resolution amid scenes of suffering unparalleled in modern history, gave her young life to the party of combat, the Narodnaya Volya (the People's Will). For four years —the years in which one after another of the revolutionary leaders, Dubrovin, Ossinsky, Brantner, Sviridenko, Soloviov, Lizogoub, Sophia Perovsky, were brought to the scaffold—she worked with an extraordinary vigour and capacity. The indictment in the trial of September 25–28, 1883, represented her as an accomplice in all the attempts on the life of Alexander II.; but she was peculiarly successful in obtaining recruits in the ranks of the army. She was at length betrayed to Sudyekin by the renegade Degayev, and went to her doom, as has been said, "like a living incarnation of the Revolution, beautiful like its ideal, sure of herself like a conqueror, and accusing her judges like their own conscience."

Will she live to see the victory of the cause for which she has suffered so much? It may be.

CHAPTER VII

SIBERIAN EXILE AS IT IS

SIBERIAN exile, for the outer world the familiar type of all the horrors of human misrule, has been abolished, not once, but many times in recent years—by British journalists, who until lately have been only too ready to accept Imperial decrees and official explanations at their face value, and to retail with optimistic commentaries official projects that were doomed, even if they were not intended, to disappear after serving this trivial purpose. In Russia "clemency manifestoes" and promises of minor reforms are concocted from time to time, mainly for the benefit of the peasantry; among the educated classes, these many years, they have been received with icy scepticism. Any remaining hopes were disposed of at the outset of the present reign. Nicholas II. was young and reputedly gentle; his German wife would surely influence him toward mercy and progress. When, as Tsarevich, he visited Siberia, he was believed to have personally inspected the condition of the political exiles. He really did and could do nothing of the kind, for the politicals were carefully removed or put out of sight before his passage. Since there must be a coronation manifesto, however—even Alexander III., who ascended the throne after the murder of his father, could not avoid this traditional solatium—it was commonly expected that two leading

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and notorious scandals of Russian life must be wiped out. These were corporal punishment and "administrative" imprisonment and exile. On the first subject a campaign of protest had been lately waged, under the leadership of Count Tolstoy, with the sympathy of all non-official sections of society. The discovery that neither of these evils was to be touched, nor the police and prison administration, nor the censorship, nor the clerical inquisition, quenched the faint hope of better times under Nicholas II., and the revival of political conspiracy began in earnest.

Some important changes have been made in the interval, but whether on the whole they leave the punitive system better or worse than it was when Mr. Kennan made his journey of discovery, it is impossible to say. The chief modifications date back to the *ukaz* of June 10–23, 1900, the object of which was stated to be "to take off Siberia the heavy burden imposed upon her as a country into which depraved people have been poured for centuries." This project was promptly hailed as closing one of the blackest chapters in Russian history; and a well-known British weekly illustrated paper, not to be outdone by the solemn leader-writers of the day, printed two photographic illustrations, boldly headed "The last exiles that will ever go to Siberia," with comments by a writer who, having spent eight days in the train between Irkutsk and Moscow, had actually seen the party in question, and so knew all about it! Yet, as a table in a later chapter shows, more persons were deported to Siberia in 1903 than for many years past, and in that year—three years after the "abolition" *ukaz*—470 "politicals" alone were received at the prison of Krasnoyarsk, Eastern Siberia, between April and October, two-fifths of these being "intellectuals" and

THE EXILE'S DEATH.

After the painting of Malchevsky.

one-sixth women.* Such is the obstinate trustfulness of human nature that Mr. Volkhovsky, who has suffered enough at the hands of the Tsars—in and out of Siberia—to justify the extremest scepticism, wrote a comparatively optimistic account of this decree,† to which I am here indebted.

The general operation of "administrative order," that is, punishment on suspicion, or at least without trial, has been explained. Exile was, and remains, of four kinds, two of these—exile by sentence of regular courts, and by decision of the *mir*, in cases of peasants and "unprivileged" townsmen only—applying mainly to criminal offences; and the other two—administrative exile by order of the Minister of the Interior, with or without the co-operation of the Minister of Justice, and administrative expulsion by a Governor-General under the "state of siege" rules—applying mainly to political and religious offences. The declared intention of the decree of 1900 was in all these cases to reduce the amount of exile by substituting for it imprisonment; to transfer the remaining quantum of exile to the island of Sakhalin or to the remote European provinces, such as Archangel, Olonetz, Vologda, Viatka, and to limit the right of the *mir* to banish its members, this matter being placed under the control of local police officers and marshals of nobility, who have thus a new and dangerous power. I shall show in the next chapter that Sakhalin in some ways eclipses the worst records of the older convict settlements; and the conditions of the remoter European provinces are very much like those of the remoter Siberian districts, with which I shall presently deal. The rest of the programme could

* *Posledniya Isvyestiya*, the news circular of the Russian Jewish Socialist Labour organization, the Bund, April, 1904.

† *Free Russia*, October, 1900.

only be carried out in part, because prison accommodation was already insufficient to meet an increasing demand. In so far as it has been carried out, the overcrowding, which was one of the worst features of the prison *régime*, has been aggravated. As compared with the milder exile sentences, which ended in a period of colonization under police surveillance, imprisonment with hard labour, and in the case of persons of "unprivileged birth" with liability to flogging and other disciplinary punishments, simply means a certain increase of the severity of penalties with a possible decrease of the period of punishment. Moreover, many of these prisons are in Siberia—that is to say, are thousands of miles away from the great cities where, though free discussion is forbidden, facts do leak out and a certain public opinion does exist. What this may mean, two or three instances must serve to indicate. In December, 1903, Colonel Foss, governor of the prison of Ekaterinburg, was brought to trial and sentenced to three years' penal servitude for embezzlement, forgery, and cruelty to prisoners. It was shown that he had established systematic torture, some prisoners being flogged to death, and others going mad. In September, 1902, some particulars were allowed to appear in the Siberian press showing a shocking state of affairs in the great central prison of Alexandrovsk. During service in the prison church, one of the convicts begged the priest to make a personal inquiry, and it was found that prisoners were kept caged up on trivial pretexts for lengthy periods, that the insanitary conditions had caused outbreaks of disease, that complaints were punished, and that the brutality of the warders had led to a "hunger strike" on a large scale. In July, 1901, N. Makhov, a Kharkov weaver, exiled administratively for five years to the province of Yeniseysk, was unduly detained in

the local prison of Achinsk, and, on making complaint, was visited by the director, who beat him cruelly and repeatedly about the head and body.*

During the summer of 1900, Mr. Henry Norman, M.P., went as far as Irkutsk by the Siberian railway, and while there visited the city prison. "Its official accommodation," he wrote in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, "is for 700 prisoners, but there were 1024 within its walls on the day of my visit." The greater number of these were either awaiting trial after a "preliminary examination," or were awaiting transference to Sakhalin, to the prison of Alexandrovsk, forty miles away, or to other places. "Four wards did I enter, seeing, perhaps, 600 prisoners of all ages, from youths to very old men, of all the nationalities which Russia contains, and charged with all the crimes in the code. Every one of these prisoners was awaiting trial, and I was told that many of them would be there as long as two years." Mr. Norman has said many a too kind word for the Russian Government, but he confesses that "the faces of these men, from wild beast to vacant idiot, haunted me for days."

Official statistics show an average inflow of exiles into Siberia during the twelve years, 1887–99, of rather more than 7000 persons yearly. While the number of criminal exiles tended to decrease from this point onwards, the number of "politicals" greatly increased until the outbreak of the Japanese war. The stream was then temporarily diverted to Archangel and other northern districts. "Since the war commenced," writes an exile, to *La Tribune Russe* (September 26, 1904), "the north of European Russia has become the place for the isolation of the 'revolutionary microbe.' There are now about 70,000 of us in the four or five

* *Free Russia*, November, 1901, where Makhov's letter is printed.

northern provinces; in some parts the number of political exiles is equal to that of the native population. Our existence is dreadful from the material point of view. Exiles belonging to the higher classes receive only twelve roubles per month each, while those of the lower classes get but half that sum. Since this far-distant and sparsely peopled country has been thus invaded the prices of food and other necessaries has risen proportionately, so we are subject to all manner of privations." Many of those subjected to these conditions are workmen and peasants; but many are men and women of the professional classes, students, doctors, members of *zemstvos*, and teachers. As though nature were not hard enough, the lot of these is made more intolerable by official limitation of the occupations by which they may add to the miserable pittance allowed to them by the Government. And let it always be remembered that most of these offenders have never been tried, that often no definite charge has been made against them, and that arrests and punishment by sheer mistake frequently occur.

Yet their case is still a happy one as compared with the unfortunates who are relegated to the newer exile places in the extreme north and east of Siberia, designed by the diabolic genius of Plehve and his assistants. The *ukaz* of 1900 promised the abolition of Siberian exile—unless new districts should be chosen for penal settlement! New districts were chosen, as far away from civilization as any spot that could be found on the land-surface of the globe, as far away from the capital as the Zambesi is from London, or Samoa from New York, but, instead of those happy skies, amid the desert *tundras* and marshes of the Arctic circle, otherwise inhabited only by a few savage hunters and fishermen. Most of these places lie in the provinces of Yeniseysk and

PARTY OF POLITICAL EXILES: ARCHANGEL.

Yakutsk, which stretch right across the far north of Asia from the Gulf of Obi nearly as far east as the peninsula of Kamtchatka. In the former and smaller province the reader will find on reference to a large map the tiny town of Turukhansk within 500 miles of the mouth of the Yenisey River, and as far north of the town of Yeniseysk, which in turn is 200 miles north of Achinsk on the Siberian railway. Far away eastward again, in 130° E., on the river Lena, lies Yakutsk, an outpost town, the local life of which, if existence in such a place can be called life, is necessarily at the mercy of the governor and the police. From this point exiles are distributed yet further north, to such places as Vilyuisk (122° E., 63° 45′ N.)—where a special prison was built for the survivors of the Yakutsk massacre of 1889—Shigansk, Krasnoye, and Verkoyansk, just inside the Arctic circle, and finally to Yakut villages on the Kolyma river, especially Sredne Kolymsk, and Nijni Kolymsk, the latter on the coast of the Arctic Ocean.

I cannot hope to give any idea of what banishment to these regions means, especially to men and women of gentle breeding and poor physique. They must live in the squalid *yurtas*—huts built of rough logs filled in with mud and turf—of natives with whom they cannot exchange more than a few words. Coarse black bread, tea, petroleum, are luxuries. Letters and journals can reach them, if at all, only at long intervals. Doctors and nurses are thousands of miles away; the only possible relief of the fearful monotony is an occasional visit to or from some other unfortunate; and so, to the struggle to keep alive, is added a no less desperate struggle to preserve health and sanity. In the warm season these districts are so plagued with insects that travelling in many parts is impossible, and the exile parties always come and go in winter. In Verkoyansk

the average temperature for the year is only 1° F. above zero, and in the three winter months it sinks to thirteen degrees below the freezing-point of mercury. Even in Yakutsk, the capital of the province, the mean annual temperature is only 14° F., and reference to an isothermal map will show that this is the average for the northern coast of Spitzbergen, the centre of Greenland, and the northern coast of Hudson's Bay.

In course of his journey across Siberia to America by the Behring Strait, in 1902, Mr. Harry de Windt, another witness who cannot be suspected of unfriendliness to the Russian Government, visited Sredne Kolymsk, and wrote that he was "absolutely astounded" at what he saw. The conditions of the settlement were so appalling that "quite fifty per cent. of the exiles die raving mad, either from the solitude or the character of their surroundings, and from the fact that they never know whether their sentence of banishment will not be suddenly extended. Of the many suicides which take place, there were four in a settlement of twenty people within two years, and they almost always occur shortly before their expected release. A doctor at Sredne Kolymsk, himself an exile, told me that in the Arctic settlements every woman over thirty years of age suffers from an hysterical form of insanity, which is dreaded more than death. Only a few weeks before I reached Sredne Kolymsk, a political prisoner blew out his brains after being flogged by the chief of police, who was himself shot dead the next day by a friend of the exile." That this, if an extreme, is by no means a solitary instance, may be gathered from the fact that among the "politicals" of the province of Yakutsk, in the first four months of 1904, there were three cases of madness, two attempts at suicide, three suicides, and seven other deaths. Kara in its worst period could not show such

a record as this. Nor are these facts at all new. Political offenders have been exiled to these parts for twenty years past; and in his "King Log and King Stork" (1896), Stepniak gave a number of cases of insanity and suicide among them.

A single trustworthy narrative will give a better impression of the reality of Siberian exile to-day than many statistics; and so, setting aside other but generally more fragmentary evidence, I will content myself by reciting as briefly as possible the life-story of a man whose good fortune it has been to escape from this inferno during the last few months, and to reach England sound in body and mind, young in years and spirit, though old in struggle and suffering, a poor alien, if you please, and an escaped convict, yet one of the soldiers of liberty and democracy to whom free men in happier lands than his own should be glad to pay their tribute of respect. Mr. Mark Broido is of the third exile generation—if such a division may be invented in an army wherein active service rarely lasts for more than ten years—that I have known; and he is no unworthy successor of the veterans of the Narodnaya Volya, no unworthy spokesman of the youth who throughout Russia to-day are raising the standard of revolt. An engineer by profession, cultured and refined, he has sacrificed every material prospect in the effort to help the dumb masses of his people to win their freedom; and many as I have been fortunate enough to know of his predecessors in this great contest, none perhaps has made upon me a deeper impression of high-mindedness and devotion. How Mr. Broido became a revolutionist I shall tell in his own words in a later chapter. He was arrested in St. Petersburg in February, 1901, after the discovery of a secret printing-office which he had helped to establish, and after long preliminary

confinement, without any form of trial, was packed off to Eastern Siberia, there to await the announcement of his precise sentence. This was delivered long afterward—eight years of exile in the province of Yakutsk.

The exile road is no longer as Kennan saw and described it. It was said, at the time of the *ukaz* of 1900, that the building of the Trans-Siberian line logically involved, and even necessitated, the abolition of the old penal system; and this was true so far as regards the narrow strip of land through which the line runs. In a word, the sphere of punishment has been pushed away into the wilderness. The Kara political prison was closed soon after the horrible events of 1889, the prisoners being transferred to Akatui, Nerchinsk, Sakhalin, or Yakutsk. The central prison of Alexandrovsk has swallowed larger and larger numbers of offenders; new prisons have been built in Irkutsk and other towns; for the rest the barren and illimitable North has been resorted to. Convict parties now go for the greater part of their journey not on foot by the old post-road, but by railway—the single considerable improvement yet effected. Sometimes they go direct as far as Krasnoyarsk, but most often both politicals and criminals are moved on from place to place—from St. Petersburg to Moscow, thence to Samara, thence to Tobolsk—staying at each prison for a new party to be made up.

Beyond Alexandrovsk, the general distributing centre, the familiar evils of the *étape* system are still experienced—filthy lock-ups, capricious and brutal gaolers and convoy officers, bad food, a degrading promiscuity—and, indeed, they are often aggravated by the fact that less distinction is made than formerly between "politicals" and ordinary criminals. The party in which Mr. Broido, his wife, and their two

children were numbered, after having reached Krasnoyarsk from St. Petersburg in ten days, and spent two months there, arrived at Irkutsk by train; and then began their real hardships, the tale of which would be well-nigh incredible if, plentiful corroboration apart, there were not precedents for every episode of purposeless suffering. From Irkutsk they travelled for several hundred miles in rough peasant carts, and then a longer distance down river by *pausok*,* making regular stops at small wayside lock-ups. "I shall never forget," says Mr. Broido, "the horrible impression of our first halting-place. It was a dirty low-roofed room, feebly lighted by grated windows, and with no furniture but the sleeping-planks which stood out from the walls, leaving only a narrow passage between. We were so astonished and disgusted that we stood speechless in the doorway; but the children quickly accommodated themselves to these strange conditions, jumping on to the benches, and playing innocently among the ordinary prisoners. There was no separation of men's and women's quarters, but the 'politicals' kept together, and managed to make a screen of sheets." On the land journey from thirty to forty miles a day was covered, and every third day the party stayed to rest. By river the speed was better, and the travelling, at least for the "politicals," who were allowed on the roof-deck, more comfortable. At length the small town of Kirensk, on the Lena, 150 miles from the northern end of Lake Baikal, was reached; and here Broido was located for ten months, being permitted to engage himself as assistant to an engineer.

That such men so situated do not sink into apathy and abject obedience to the nearest policeman is a fact

* A large flat-bottomed barge, a sort of floating house of one storey, carried down by the stream without motive power.

for which I shall not offer any apology. The oligarchy cannot imprison all its enemies, and it adopts the method of exile, not because it may be more merciful, but because it is cheaper and less troublesome. I have said enough of life in these regions to make it clear that it is only tolerable, or, rather, it is only possible, if reasonable liberty of intercourse among the exile groups be allowed. But this may and does lead to occasional escapes or attempts to escape. A Government deserving the name, if it can be imagined face to face with such a problem, would attack it resolutely and radically. Under the Tsardom no social problem is attacked in that way. M. Plehve, still alive and in power in the spring of 1903, was, however, a master of petty expedients in tyranny, and it is to his action, through Count Kutaysov, Governor-General of Irkutsk, that the tragic events now to be briefly recited were due.* In future, special measures were to be taken to prevent unauthorized journeys by exiles, rigid surveillance being instituted, daily reports made, all exiles' correspondence read, and perquisitions made on the slightest suspicion. The police were warned that they had not been doing their duty, and that any lack of zeal in future would be promptly punished. They did not need further urging.

Attached to Count Kutaysov's circular was a form which the political exiles were summoned to sign. Regarding the threat to punish unauthorized absence with banishment to the Arctic circle as illegal, they refused to do so. Broido was one of them, and along with twenty-five others, all "politicals," he was ordered to be deported to Nijni Ilymsk, a village of two or three

* Count Kutaysov's "absolutely secret" circular to the authorities of Eastern Siberia was summarized in the *Times* of December 25, 1903, and its full text was given in *L'Europeen* of December 19, 1903.

hundred inhabitants, a thousand miles from Kirensk. This meant, in the first place, a steamer journey of 250 miles down the Lena, and then a series of stages by open boats on smaller rivers. Though it was yet summer, the nights were bitterly cold, the boat was often buried in fog, and the wretched huts in which the halts were made were infested by insects. At last the mountain-chain of Ilymsk was crossed in peasants' carts, and one more journey was over. But now there was to be another surprise from the inexhaustible tragi-comic repertory of the oligarchy. Three days after their arrival Broido and his family were ordered by telegraph to return to Kirensk, there to join a party of politicals who were to be deported to Yakutsk. No reason was given; it was only when this further double journey of over 2000 miles was completed that its object was explained. The exact sentence for Broido's original offence had only just arrived from St. Petersburg, and this superseded all intermediate penalties! To the women and children especially this weary itinerary was full of extreme hardship. The year was creeping on; food was bad and insufficient; they had no money but the official allowance of fourpence a day; the children fell ill with whooping-cough.

On the second part of the journey there was added to the misery of cold, wet, and hunger, the torment of a cruel officer. But though Broido's party were ill-treated, they came off better than another party who passed over the same route a few weeks before, with some members of which (including the M. Lurie, who appears with him in one of our photographs) he was afterwards to be acquainted. In that case, the convoy officer, Sikorsky, made repeated attempts to outrage a woman prisoner; and, after provoking a conflict in which several men and one woman were wounded, he

was at length shot by a political named Minsky, a soldier at the same time killing a prisoner named Schatz.*

On September 6, 1903, Broido reached Yakutsk, and learned that, not content with any moderate interpretation of the sentence of eight years of exile in Eastern Siberia, Count Kutaysov had determined to send him to the furthest possible point—Kolymsk—over a thousand miles away on the Arctic Ocean. There he might be to-day but for a further incident, this time an utterly unrelieved tragedy.

In the early spring of last year an address was sent to M. Plehve by a number of exiles in Yakutsk, which contained the following passages:—

"The burdensome conditions of life for political exiles in the Yakutsk province have been made so much worse during recent years by a series of Gov.-General Kutaysov's circulars, that it is no longer possible to endure them. The exiles, usually badly clad, are, as a rule, despatched from the local prisons of European Russia on the shortest notice; they are prevented—under the possible penalty of being mercilessly beaten by the escort—from communicating on their way out with any of their already exiled comrades, who, in their turn, are threatened with further exile to the remotest places for such an 'offence.' Thus the exiled are deprived of any opportunity of providing themselves with things necessary for the journey, and the foundation of continuous friction between the exiled and the officials, as

* Details of this affray will be found in *Free Russia* for November, 1904, and *La Tribune Russe* for August 20, 1904, where the names of the twenty-eight exiles are given. This affray was no new thing. On June 18, 1898, a gang of 206 prisoners, eleven of them politicals, left the Alexandrovsk forwarding prison for Irkutsk by *étape* under one Captain Bassarba. This man exhibited a fiendish temper not only to the convicts, but to the soldiers of the convoy. At last a protest was raised, on which the officer ordered a volley to be fired among the prisoners, three of whom were killed. In an article reprinted by the *Novoye Vremya*, the *Siberian Messenger* attributed the incident to sudden insanity on the part of Bassarba (*Free Russia*, January, 1899).

well as brutal ill-treatment of the former, is laid. By the circulars the town of Yakutsk is excluded from the list of places of exile, and persons who have long lived there in banishment in virtue of permits, are being expelled. They are sent to the wildest country, where there are neither any dwellings to be got, nor medical assistance, nor any necessaries of life. The circulars mentioned are not necessitated by any real circumstances, at any rate so far as the Yakutsk province is concerned. The journeys of the exiles from their respective places of installation cannot be frequent, if for no other reason than because their purses are so light. Escapes, even if we admit their possibility, cannot be hindered by the prohibition of such journeys. Quite recently our comrades who have completed their term of exile have been confronted with a new act of persecution on the part of the Yakutsk administration: the latter has declined to send them back to their respective homes at the expense of the Government; only after a great many protests and negotiations has the administration consented to send them away at the expense of the local rural population, always giving warning that this will be the last time. This converts our exile into a trap from which there is no escape for the majority of us. Therefore we request that those who have concluded their term of exile should be reinstated at their respective homes at Government expense; that the latest circulars concerning visiting of places outside the respective points of exile, the administrative disciplinary punishments for the breach of the rules endorsed under police supervision, and the prohibition to prisoners sent into exile to see outsiders on their journey should be repealed."

I might quote, in illustration of this statement of grievances, individual cases of cruel punishment of trifling offences, such as that of an exiled student, Sevinson, who, while undergoing the last months of his sentence, was banished to Verkhoyansk for having met a passing party of "politicals;" and having on his way thither entered the town of Yakutsk to make some purchases, contrary to the terms of the new circular, was arrested and deported still further to Nijni Kolymsk.

In the middle of February, 1904, the party of twenty-three "politicals" alluded to above in connection with the barbarities of the officer Sikorsky, reached Yakutsk, and at the same time Plehve's order that henceforth exiles must return to Russia, if at all, at their own expense became known. The system of surveillance and the undisguised hostility of the Governor-General had cut these unfortunate men and women off from the world that might have helped them, and, driven at length to despair, they determined upon an act of open rebellion. There was no need to seek for a model. On this very ground took place what became known throughout the world as the Yakutsk Massacre of March 22, 1899, when thirty-five exiles, awaiting removal to the Arctic settlements under unusually inhuman conditions, declined to leave a house in which they were gathered, and were fusiladed by a body of troops, six being killed outright and twenty-two wounded.* Even if the present generation of "politicals" had not known of that butchery, there were others in the town who remembered it, including its author, one Olesov, then and still an officer of police in Yakutsk; and by a strange turn of events this Olesov was to now be one of the chief instigators of a new battue.

On March 2, 1904, forty-one political exiles, of whom Broido was one of the leaders and spokesman, shut themselves up in a house hired for the purpose, barricaded all the entrances, and sent word to the Acting Governor of the town that they would not come out till the "circulars," which were illegal and which made life impossible, were withdrawn. At first the Acting Governor was humanely disposed, and allowed

* "King Log and King Stork," vol. ii. ch. 3, and "The Slaughter of Political Prisoners in Russia," a pamphlet issued by the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom in 1890.

THE BESIEGED EXILES IN YAKUTSK (MARCH, 1904).

1 2 3
4 5 6

1. Tessler. 2. Tepiov. 3. Perasitz. 4. M. Broido.
5. M. Lurie. 6. Kurnatovsky.

S. Komay. M. Broido. Eve Broido. S. Fried.

the exiles to send to M. Plehve the telegram quoted above. Then, under pressure of the police, and probably also of the central Government, he suddenly took stern measures. On March 17 the house was first fired on, one of the besieged, George Matlakhov, being killed, and four (Kostushko, Medyanik, Khatskelevich, and Rabinovich) wounded. After this the exiles fired back and killed one soldier. On the 20th this new "Fort Chabrol" capitulated; and, after five months in prison, on August 12, fifty-five persons implicated (most of whom had originally been members of either the Social Democratic Labour Party or the Union of Jewish workmen, "the Bund"), one of them a woman, were put on trial with closed doors. After ten days' sittings, during which they were ably defended by two well-known Russian barristers, MM. Bernstam and Zarudny, the prisoners were condemned and sentenced under sections 263 & 268 of the Penal Code to twelve years' imprisonment each—a total of 660 years—while Dr. L. L. Nikiforof, as a former military officer, was sentenced to one year in a disciplinary battalion, and three others were acquitted. The fact that a steamer had been chartered to convey them to prison a month before the trial began indicated that the sentence was predetermined.

The condemned, who included M. Broido, M. V. Lurie, G. S. Lurie, L. V. Tesler, P. F. Teplov, and F. L. Fried, were now conveyed to the central convict prison of Alexandrovsk, and it is significant that during this journey of several weeks they were not prevented from seeing their friends and relatives in the places through which they passed. Broido's wife and children were allowed to accompany the party, and it was arranged between them that, if he could escape, she would make her way as soon as possible to European Russia and then abroad. One evening, when the convoy

was within twenty-five miles of its destination, profiting by a moment of confusion, Broido took his life in his hands and slipped through the line of the escort into the dead darkness. After tramping without rest for twenty-four hours through muddy country, he reached the Angara River and succeeded in boarding a passing steamer. In Irkutsk he was hidden by friends who, when it was comparatively safe, set him upon his journey provided with sufficient means to reach England. When I first saw him in London in January last, his wife had already joined him. I wondered as we talked whether the gain of freedom is any compensation for the loss of fatherland. But now, looking back over their story, I forget all the suffering here typified in a sense of the sheer stupidity of a system under which armies of police, gaolers, and other officials are maintained in order to inflict useless torment upon a man who has helped to establish a printing-office.

CHAPTER VIII

RUSSIA'S "ILE DU DIABLE"

ALTHOUGH—a dozen decrees and a thousand journalistic statements to the contrary notwithstanding—Siberian exile has not been abolished, it has been modified by a diversion of large parts of the stream of "unfortunates" to other destinations, especially the large and desolate island of Sakhalin, in the North Pacific ocean. Russians, like others, waxed indignant over the cruel fate of Dreyfus, but here was a Devil's Island on a thousandfold larger scale, and hardly a word of protest was heard.

It is about fifty years since Sakhalin was occupied, thirty-five years since the first batch of convicts was sent there, and twenty-five since deportation on a large scale began. In 1884, so large had the business already become that a Governor with a full executive staff was appointed from St. Petersburg, the island being divided into three administrative districts. In the same year women were first deported to Sakhalin. At first the convict parties were sent overland, and the greater part of the way on foot—an incredible journey of between four and five thousand miles; and cases are on record of men who survived this journey, escaped from prison after it, and made their way right across Siberia to European Russia, only to be captured there and sent back again. Very soon, however, land transport was

abandoned, and the convicts were shipped in periodical batches by steamers of the so-called Volunteer Fleet (*Dobrovolny Flott*), *viâ* Odessa and the Suez Canal. The wretched conditions of this traffic drew much public attention in the early eighties; but afterwards a better type of vessel was built. Some years ago the report that one of these prison ships—fitted with cages for the prisoners, and a hose arrangement by which they can be boiled alive with steam in case of mutiny—was being built on the Clyde, roused a good deal of feeling in England and Scotland. One of these vessels carried eight hundred prisoners 'tween decks, of whom only twenty were allowed on deck at a time in fine weather.

Exile to Sakhalin, like exile to Siberia before it, had in the eyes of the Russian Government three objects. The first, of course, was to get rid of real criminals and those inconvenient people to the oligarchy, the worst kind of criminals—political agitators. The second was the profitable working of the coal mines of the island. The third was agricultural colonization. The first of these ends has been so completely achieved that a man or a woman deported to this hermetically sealed island is lost to the world. In its second object the Tsar's Government has been less successful, for the coal is of poor quality, convict labour is not cheap, and markets are far distant. In the third object it has completely failed. The idea of free colonization was abandoned in 1886, when a number of families, who had been sent out at the expense of the Government seventeen years before, abandoned the attempt to live by agriculture on the island, and migrated to the mainland. The truth was admitted by the Russian Government—perhaps unwittingly—in the following passage in a report on "Siberia and the Siberian Railway," published in

English for the Chicago Exhibition: "In what unfavourable climatic conditions, notwithstanding a comparatively not very northerly situation, the island is placed, thanks to the current flowing down from the bleak Okhotsk Sea along the eastern littoral, bringing with it huge masses of ice, is evident. The mean temperature in the principal settlement of the island, Duc, is 0·5 degree. The mean temperature of the five months' vegetative period, less than 12 degrees, is insufficient for the development here of permanent agriculture. . . . In a word, Sakhalin is unfit for agricultural colonization." This meant the abandonment of the one humane feature of exile at the older Siberian penal colonies.

The fact is that the island, except for a few weeks of uncertain midsummer sunshine, is ice-bound and fog-bound; the climate is harsh; even in June the hills are covered with snow, and the soil is frozen twenty inches deep; dwarf forests cover the mountains, and the valleys, with few exceptions, are narrow and marshy; roads are made and kept with great difficulty; there are no good harbours. The hovels of the few settlers who try to make a living out of the icy soil are depicted by Dr. Tchekhov as being like the dens of wild beasts. The whole population depends upon Government allowances of food.

A few years ago news reached London, through Odessa, from Eastern Siberia that so terrible a state of affairs was prevalent on the island that the Governor had had to interfere for the protection of prisoners against minor prison officers. A number of convicts were stated to have deliberately maimed themselves in order to get free of certain cruel warders. "Others fled into the impenetrable forest"—so the message ran—"where they suffered all the horrors of hunger.

In a satchel belonging to a fugitive convict who had been hunted down were found some pieces of human flesh, and other cases of cannibalism have been reported."

CONVICTS CHAINED TO WHEELBARROWS, SAKHALIN.

Such escapes are sometimes successful—the convicts getting across the narrow strip of sea to the mainland in a stolen boat or on a rough raft; but more frequently the wretched fellows are captured by the savage natives —Gilyaks or Ainos, who receive a regular reward from the Government—or are drowned or die of starvation.

There is more than one well-attested story of cannibalism on Sakhalin.

It must be remembered in every aspect of the Russian penal system that those who have been tried and those who have had no trial, burly ruffians and delicate victims of culture and conscience, the murderer, the gentle sectary, and the political propagandist, men, women, and mere children, are treated under it almost indiscriminately. By decree issued on March 8, 1888, by Mr. Galkin Vraskoy, head of the General Prison Administration, to the Governor of Sakhalin, corporal punishment was reimposed in the case of political offenders, men or women. Already there had been a general Siberian order (the text of which is given by Mr. George Kennan in his book on "Siberia and the Exile System") removing the privileges of "politicals," and putting them upon the same basis, women and all, with ordinary convicts. In this later order it was more specifically stated that "no difference must be admitted" between the political offender and the common malefactor; "flogging and the plet must be allowed."

Russian feeling in regard to the flogging of "politicals" is historically embodied in the verdict of the St. Petersburg jury which acquitted Vera Zassulitch after the shooting of General Trepov in 1877. But in Sakhalin, as in Kara, there was no public opinion, and reprisals are impossible. For eleven years there was no case of such punishment; but the gaolers were only waiting for permission. In July, 1888, a political exile named Volnov, having been struck by an official whom he did not know, had the bad taste to return the blow. Twenty of his companions waited on the "district commander" to intercede for him. The whole band were punished in various ways, while two of their

spokesmen, Tomashevsky and Maizhner, were sentenced to thirty, and Volnov himself to forty, strokes of the rod. The others were forced to witness the process of whipping. One of them wrote: "You will ask, why have we not protested by fighting to the death and let

RIVETING FETTERS IN A SAKHALIN PRISON.

ourselves be killed rather than submit to the outrage? It was impossible. We were chained hand and foot, and each of us was surrounded by a body of soldiers. Before the execution of the sentence we were kept separated, and knew nothing of each other. Perhaps you will ask how we can live after undergoing such ignominy. To this question I will answer by silence."

Silence long brooded over the Russian Ile du Diable,

only an occasional shriek of agony, as it were, piercing to the outside world. But gradually in the last few years a series of revelations and criticisms have found their way into the Russian press. First, Dr. Tchekhov's report of "cruel corporal punishments" escaped the censor, and then in 1900, under the guise of cold history, an account of the flogging of convicts, with illustrations (three of which I have copied) by a former exile, Mr. Mirolubov, appeared in the *Russian Historical Review*. Even Mr. Harry de Windt's supply of white-wash gave out in Sakhalin. In the account of his visit to the island he speaks of punishment by the birch and plet (a horrible loaded whip), by chaining to a wheelbarrow, and imprisonment in special penitentiary cells; and he mentions a prisoner who for a whole year was kept waiting for execution. The discipline of the two chief gaols he describes as "extremely severe, far more so than in any Siberian prison," punishment by the "plet" as "a terribly severe one, worse even than the now abolished 'knout.'" A second attempt to escape is generally punished by being chained for a year to a wheelbarrow, "a terrible and much-dreaded" sentence.

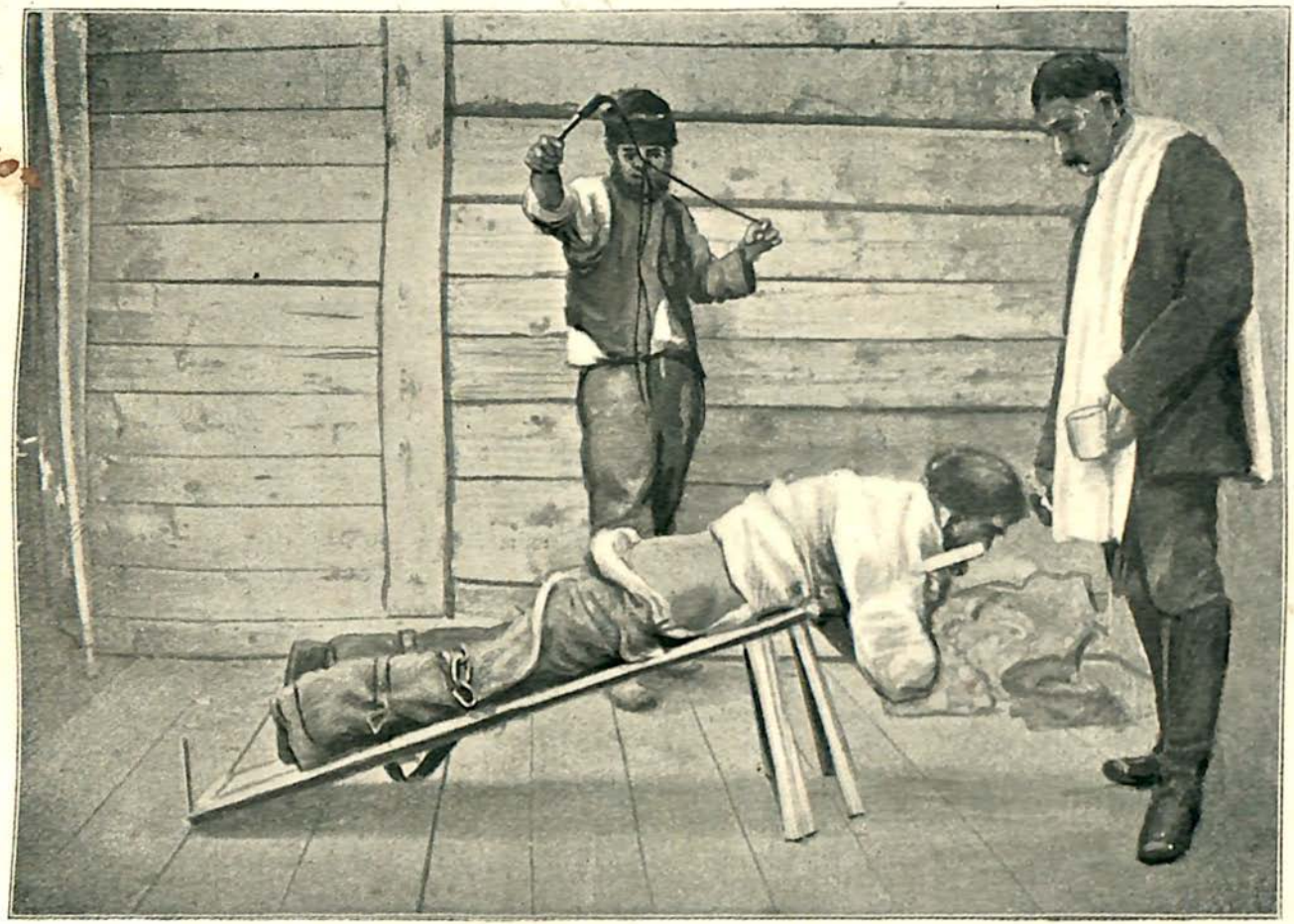
In the Russian weekly *Vrach* (*The Physician*), No. 93, 1901, "A Sakhalin Surgeon" declared that a woman *enceinte* had recently been flogged, and that others in the same condition were not infrequently sent to the most remote and deserted parts of the island, where there was no possibility whatever of obtaining medical help. After this it is not impossible to believe statements recently printed in the newspapers of the Amur province of Eastern Siberia—papers which had certainly no object in manufacturing such news, and that have presumably passed the local, if not the central, censorship. The *Pri Amurski Vyedomosti* described

the head of one of the chief prisons as "a demon who for fourteen years had abused his office by his barbarous ill-treatment of the prisoners of both sexes under his charge." Every day, it stated, some convicts in the island were barbarously flogged, women, old and young, being beaten with whips and fists, or kicked, often with no cause whatever. Another prison chief, who struck a convict insensible, and had him dragged to his cell at the end of a lasso, for some trivial fault, was mentioned by the *Amursky Kray*. Perhaps the thing most calculated to shock readers strange to the subject is a reference to the system of compulsory "marriage" of convicts. "On the arrival of a party of female deportees from European Russia, the single women are assembled in a large barrack-room. The bachelor convicts are then admitted in turn to choose their wives, and the couples are forthwith married." This has been only too fully confirmed.

A Commission appointed in 1901, under the chairmanship of Senator and Privy Councillor N. E. Shmeman, to consider the reorganization of the Sakhalin penal administration,* had before it evidence of mismanagement, not only from such an expert as the jurist and criminalist, D. A. Drill,† but also from the Governor-General of the Amour District, the Military Governor of Sakhalin, and P. A. Salomon, Mr. Galkin Vraskoy's successor at the head of the General Prison

* For fuller details, see two articles by the able and well-informed Russian writer, Vasily Zhook, on "The Truth about Sakhalin," in *Free Russia* for January and February, 1902.

† Mr. Drill reached the Alexandrovsky prison just at the time when the assistant-governor was punishing a convict by flogging, and, to his astonishment, found that the reason of this penalty was that the prisoner had refused to carry out the same sentence on another convict, and that it was the second time he had been flogged for such refusal! Nearly two thousand convicts in this prison had refused to discharge this duty, and it had apparently been thought necessary to make an example.



FLOGGING WITH THE PLET. SAKHALIN.

Reproduced from the "Istorichesky Vyestnik," St. Petersburg.

Board. Some of this evidence had, indeed, been published in the *Prison Messenger* and other official journals. It was proved not only that great administrative blunders had been made, but that the moral and social condition of the colony was indescribably bad, drinking, gambling, and the worst vices being rampant.

The latest detailed statistics I have obtained are for 1897, when there were on the island 4979 hard-labour convicts (755 being women), 1566 released convicts (293 being women), 6934 exiles (879 being women), a total of 13,479, or nearly a half of the Russian population of the island. To this numerical disparity of sexes—aggravated by the facts that there is no separate prison for the women, and that the troops have no families with them—Mr. Salomon attributes the worst evils lately revealed. Not only is the fact of a wholesale "marriage" system officially confirmed, but it is shown that a whole train of depravity follows from it. "The so-called concubines," says Mr. Salomon, "that is, the exiled women who are given to the settlers to help them, and for the management of their households, consider themselves as having the right freely to dispose of themselves, and they leave their partners if the latter try to prevent them admitting outside visitors. Usually, however, this is not the case, as the cohabitants share all their earnings." I cannot better Mr. Zhook's comment upon this appalling statement: "Under such circumstances, what can be their moral position? Can one reproach these unfortunates with their moral downfall, reaching even cynicism, when illegal cohabitation has become actually legalized? However guilty a woman sentenced to hard labour may be, nevertheless she does not cease to be a living being, not devoid of every sort of spiritual impulse. Deprived of 'all civil rights,' she loses by law the right to have a family; but

it is impossible to deprive her of the right to feel disgust towards the forced cohabitation, and, once she forsakes her 'master,' there is no other way open to her but to settle down with another one. This, indeed, is that 'hard labour' to which criminal women are subjected. Can one wonder at the depraving influence which the Sakhalin convict's life exercises on the free women who have voluntarily followed their exiled husbands? Is it not natural that even the little children, seeing around them such depraving spectacles, become early familiar with all the negative sides of the life of the vicious of both sexes?"

CHAPTER IX

THE BUDGET

As a speaking summary of the state of a nation, there is nothing more eloquent than its budget. The Russian Budget (I adopt the official designation) is a masterpiece of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, yet with all its faults of omission and commission it is so enlightening a document and so rich in interest that I am astonished whenever I come across one of the large and apparently popular class of books which pass by the mass of evidence here arrayed in favour of dubious gossip and superfluous declamation. Entertainment of that kind, even if it be sometimes *vraisemblable* and touched with the right feeling, can only end in producing a general scepticism as to the forces making for the liberation of the victims of the Tsardom. For the outer world as well as for Russians themselves, it is less important to entertain a vague sympathy for suffering people than to understand at least the more important factors at work behind the Tsar, the Grand Dukes, the Ministers, the police, and the priests on the one hand, and the intellectual and working classes of the Empire on the other. And this understanding is not difficult.

The "Report of the Minister of Finance to H.M. the Emperor on the Budget for 1905," printed in St. Petersburg, and issued to the world at the New Year, together with preceding Budget Statements, will afford

us a good starting-point in our inquiry. The latest volume savours a little, it is true, of the play of *Hamlet* minus the princely part, for it informs us at the outset that it "does not include the Estimates of the extraordinary expenditure to be incurred in 1905 for carrying on the war with Japan." For our immediate purpose, however, this omission, of which something will have to be said later, is rather an advantage, since it leaves a comparatively normal record of the income and expenditure of the oligarchy, as they are officially represented to stand. The representation is not a very honest one, but it will serve to provide us with a broad outline of the activities of the State as reflected in its finances. For easier reading, in the statistics that follow I roughly convert the Russian figures at 1 rouble = 2 shillings. The rouble is really worth about 2*s.* 1½*d.*

M. Kokovtsoff's summary of his Estimates for 1905 is as follows :—

		£ millions sterling
Expenditure:	Ordinary	191,606,557
„	Extraordinary	7,856,868
		199,463,425
Revenue:	Ordinary	197,704,562
„	Extraordinary	275,000
		197,979,562
From the Resources of the Treasury	...	1,483,863
		199,463,425

Two preliminary observations may here be made. The first is that the mysterious "resources" or "free balances" of the Treasury, into which surpluses go and from which deficits are made up, are a sort of lucky bag of the Finance Minister, consisting of surplus receipts (due to systematic under-estimates), unspent sums, and other windfalls, made up to whatever is needed with slices out of loans. What is the whole

sum in the war-chest of the oligarchy it is impossible to say. In the last ten years the yearly tale of "free balances" has exceeded the amounts required to cover Budget deficits by considerably more than a hundred millions sterling. I know of no account showing the disposal of this sum; but the 1905 Budget statement at least proves the Finance Minister to have been more far-sighted than the Foreign Office and the War Office. At the beginning of 1904 the Treasury held, according to the Finance Minister, a "free balance, free from all obligations," of £15,660,000, a balance of cancelled votes of £14,830,000, and by the realization of Exchequer bills and Treasury bonds £43,200,000; giving, when certain deductions for special expenditure were made, the tremendous total of £71,740,000 available quite apart from Budget revenue, and within the unrestrained power of this Minister. With the aid of these "free balances," and notwithstanding the drain for war purposes, the amount of gold stored away in the State bank and the Treasury was increased from £92 millions at the end of 1902, and £105 millions in 1903, to £123 millions at the end of 1904. In the last year, however, the gold in circulation diminished from £78 to £68 millions, and the paper issues increased from £63 to £90 millions. No doubt the Government could have drawn in gold and given out notes still more freely; but that would have meant not only a general commercial scare, but receipt of taxes in depreciated paper currency while foreign creditors had to be paid in gold. A year in which the 4 per cent. Rente fell in London from 99⅝ to 86¼ was no time for further currency adventures. While more loans could be raised, they were evidently the preferable expedient.

In the second place, it has to be observed that the distinction between "ordinary" and "extraordinary"

in the Budget is quite artificial and arbitrary, its real object being to disguise the conjuring with surpluses and deficits which M. Witte raised to a fine art, and the unremunerative character of the great system of State monopolies founded by M. Vishnegradsky and extended by M. Witte. The "extraordinary" items appear year after year—they have all the permanence of the "temporary state of siege" or the temporary anti-Semitic bye-laws; but it is necessary that they should be set in a special category, so that his Imperial Majesty and the innocent French investor may, in the main body of the Budget, be pleased with the spectacle of a successful balance. How does the account look if we put its two parts together? From 1889 to 1898 * the "ordinary" receipts and expenditure showed increasing surpluses, the total in the decade amounting to 775 million roubles. The "extraordinary" budget, on the other hand, showed an excess of expenditure amounting to just over 1000 million roubles.† In these ten years, therefore, there was a total net deficit of 225 million roubles (£22½ millions). Looking next to the Budgets of the last decade, we find the following figures:—

* "Russia in the Nineteenth Century," pp. 785, 786.

† Of 929 million roubles of extraordinary revenue, 759 millions came from loans and 109 millions from railway companies' repayments. Of 1930 millions of extraordinary expenditure, 801 millions was on amortisement of loans, 789 millions on railways, and 196 millions on famine relief in 1891 and 1892.

A TEN YEARS' BALANCE SHEET.

(£ millions.)

	Ordinary.			Extraordinary.		
	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Surplus.	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Deficit.
1896 ...	136·9	122·9	14·0	4·3	25·5	21·2
1897 ...	141·6	129·9	11·7	4·2	19·6	15·4
1898 ...	158·5	135·8	22·7	8·8	41·4	32·6
1899 ...	167·3	146·8	20·5	17·9	31·9	14·0
1900 ...	170·4	155·5	14·9	3·2	33·4	30·2
1901 ...	179·9	166·5	13·4	16·4	20·9	4·5
1902 ...	190·5	180·2	10·3	20·2	36·5	16·3
1903* ...	189·7	188·0	1·7	0·2	19·1	18·9
1904* ...	198·0	190·9	7·1	0·3	15·4	15·1
1905* ...	197·7	191·6	6·1	0·3	7·8	7·5
Ten years	1730·5	1608·1	122·4	75·8	251·5	175·7

* From the Estimates. "Extraordinary" receipts are now wholly loan moneys; "extraordinary" expenditure relates wholly to railways. It must be remembered that the cost of the Japanese war is not here included.

Comparing the two periods (though they slightly overlap), we see that the former total net deficit of £22·5 millions has in the last decade risen to £53·3 millions.

The normal financial situation of the Empire before the war had, therefore, become steadily worse in time of peace, despite the fact (or perhaps because of it) that the last twist had been given to the tax-gathering machine. No wonder that the State plunges deeper and deeper into the mire of foreign indebtedness. The war has precipitated a crisis that was ultimately inevitable, the character and outcome of which I shall discuss in a later chapter.

The details of the 1905 Estimates may be summarized as follows, in the order of their importance:—

Revenue.	£ millions.	Expenditure.	£ millions.
Ordinary:—		*Ordinary:—*	
Royalties	59·2	Ministries: Communications	44·8
State properties	57·9	War	36·7
Indirect taxes	39·9	Finance ...	34·1
Direct taxes	13·9	Public Debt	30·3
Duties	10·5	Ministry of Marine ...	11·6
Land redemption payments	7·6	„ Interior ...	10·8
Repayments to Treasury, etc.	8·3	„ Justice ...	4·9
		„ Agriculture ...	4·7
	197·7	„ Education ...	4·3
		Holy Synod	2·8
Extraordinary	0·2	Imperial household ...	1·6
		Other and special	9·5
	197·9		191·6
From resources of Treasury (*i.e.* deficit)	1·5	*Extraordinary:—*	
		On Siberian Railway ...	1·2
		Other railway expenditure and loans	6·6
	199·4		199·4

On the side of revenue, the class called "Royalties" consists to the extent of £52½ millions of revenue from the Government Spirit Monopoly, postal and telegraph revenue yielding only £6 millions. The State properties are, in the main, railways (£44 millions), forests coming next (£6 millions). By far the most important part of indirect taxation comes from Customs, which, however, in spite of an ultra-Protectionist tariff, yields only £22 millions. Sugar excise brings in nearly £8 millions, tobacco licences and excise £4½ millions, and excises and licences on lighting oils and spirituous liquor each about £3 millions. Direct taxes in Russia contribute a comparatively small part of the State revenue, yet they are numerous and burdensome, falling on all sorts of properties and industrial occupations. The old poll-tax was abolished on the establishment of the system of peasant land redemption payments in 1886; and landed property, with personal estate added, only contributes £5 millions to the revenue. The various trading

and industrial licences, and taxes on commercial capital and interest, on the other hand, bring in £6¾ millions, in addition to which there is a 5 per cent. tax on interest payable on State and private stock and on bank deposits, which yields less than £2 millions. "Duties" are chiefly by stamps (£4¾ millions), transfer of property (£2 millions), and passenger and other small taxes. The tax on passports, one of the nuisances of life under the oligarchy, now only brings in a paltry £6,500. There is no general income-tax in Russia. In spite of the activity of the district police officers—whose pay is still to some extent dependent on their success in squeezing redemption payments out of the peasantry, although "the last cow" and a necessary minimum of farm tools are now, at least nominally, protected from seizure—these taxes realize only £7 or £8 millions yearly, and even so are a grievous burden upon the poorest part of the population. A million sterling less is expected this year than last from this source. Not only are there great arrears, but the amount unpaid steadily increases, although the annual due was reduced in 1881, and arrears have been several times remitted or postponed. Through the seventies, it averaged 30 million roubles a year, through the eighties 41 millions; in the next decade it rose to over a hundred million roubles, and in 1903 112 million roubles was outstanding.* Nothing could more clearly prove the desperate poverty in which masses of the Russian people are normally

* "From the commencement of the period of redemption to January 1, 1899, 9·3 million peasant allotments, comprising together more than 33 million deciatines (approximately 89 million acres) of good land, worth about 895 millions of roubles, have been redeemed. Of this sum 185 million roubles had been paid at the reduced rates. The average redemption due in European Russia does not exceed 1r. 20k. (2*s.* 6*d.*) per inhabitant, or 7r. 20k. (15*s.*) per family of six persons" ("Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century," p. 762).

sunk than this failure to redeem the debt upon their homesteads.

But, if the State has lost in one direction, it has got its pound of flesh in another. Out of the details just given one feature clearly emerges. The Budget exhibits its authors not as the regulators, ministers, and arbiters of the nation's business, but as a junta of property owners, loan-mongers, and drink-sellers, whose vast undertakings combine every possible evil that can be plausibly attributed to the most rigorous State socialism with a spirit utterly alien to any form of socialism—a secrecy, rapacity, and dishonesty unparalleled even in the annals of the American Trusts. Of the whole Budget receipts, one half is contributed by the sale of intoxicating liquor—a State monopoly that is gradually being extended over the whole Empire—and the State railways. Take away the value of drink, railways, forests, and customs from the total revenue, and a poor £70 millions remains—not enough to pay for the Army, Navy, and Debt services. Taxation as understood in constitutional countries is a trifling and inelastic part of the balance-sheet. The oligarchy might spend their income with exemplary wisdom, and it would yet remain against them that, to the extent of two-thirds, it comes from tainted sources, from corrupt and mischievous monopoly and speculation.

Is there any sign of wisdom in expenditure? As regards the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, and the Imperial Household, this question has been to some extent anticipated. The main items of the account will be considered in the chapters that follow on the Tariff, the Railways, Drink and Debt, and the Army. The Debt services cost £30 millions, of which £28·4 millions is for interest. Under the heading of the Ministry of Finance, there is a significant item of £4·7 millions for

pensions to functionaries. The cost of the "Imperial Household" must not be mistaken for the cost of the Tsar, who, as one of the greatest capitalists in the world, rises above the petty limitations of a Budget. In this class are included the maintenance not only of the Grand Ducal households, but of certain Imperial academies and theatres. Similarly, the Church is largely dependent on its own properties; of the State grant, nearly half goes in maintaining Church schools. The Foreign Office costs only a little over half a million sterling yearly. The War Office spends over half a million on the maintenance of a separate corps of gendarmes. The Finance Ministry spends nearly a million pounds in subsidies to various public institutions, joint-stock companies, and nobility schools. Three-quarters of the expenses of the Ministry of the Interior relates to provincial administration.

CHAPTER X

DEBT AND DRINK

THE Russian Government is an adept in borrowing, and the State Debt, which rose from £500 millions in 1889 to £700 millions at the beginning of 1904, had reached about £750 millions before the question of the cost of making peace with Japan had to be considered. The following figures are given in the Budget Statement for 1903:—

GROWTH OF STATE DEBT.

(Millions of roubles.)

January 1, 1889.			January 1, 1904.		
General loans.	Railway loans.	Total.	General loans.	Railway loans.	Total.
3,629	1,363	4,992	3,462	3,189	6,651

Of course, this vast sum does not show the whole of the money that has been sunk in State business, for, during these sixteen years of peace, conditions have been favourable for the reduction both of capital and interest, and repeated conversions have been effected. For the same reason the Budget charges for the service of the Debt do not adequately indicate how dangerously this system of trading and exploitation has grown. To-day the credit of the Tsardom is irreparably damaged, and

the foreign investor has good ground to share the desire of the Russian people that a more honest, stable, and liberal rule may speedily be established. Russia has abundant natural resources, and the State owns large landed, mining, and other properties. The only thing its creditors need fear is the continuance, with the aid of further loans, of a hopeless struggle against the rising popular spirit which must involve great material losses, and may provoke a demand for repudiation.

So far, the creditor gets his steady 4 or 5 per cent.; but what of the native tax-payer? Apart from the Treasury balances already referred to, which will be more than exhausted by the current costs of the war, what has official Russia to show for the commitments covered by the above figures? The official list of sums owing to the Treasury * is not very encouraging reading. On January 1, 1904, they amounted to 2,458 million roubles on capital account and 266 millions of arrears. Of this total of £272 millions—say £2 for every £5 the State itself owes—about one half (£136 millions) consists of peasant's land redemption dues, the whole of which will certainly never be recovered. Far afterwards, the next items are from railway companies (£54 millions) and by war indemnities (£42 millions). It is a melancholy inventory: a network of railways which do not pay, the costliest of which never will pay, and—the "last cow" of the long-suffering *mujik*.

In addition to these there is one part of the State-trading system which has paid from the outset, and now contributes largely to the revenue. Of the whole Budget receipts in 1904, one half was contributed by the sale of intoxicating liquor (£50 millions) and the State railways (£46 millions). But there is this radical

* Réglement Définitif du Budget de l'Empire pour 1903. "Mémoire Explicatif présenté au Conseil de l'Empire," p. 76, etc.

difference: while drink gave a profit for the year of £32 millions, railways gave a loss of £13½ millions. For 1905 wholesale retrenchment under the latter heading has been ordered, yet the best account the Minister of Finance can give is a reduction of expenditure to £50 millions, while receipts are estimated under various heads at £48½ millions, a loss of £1½ millions quite apart from war costs. But we have seen that about one half of the public Debt of the Empire is on railway account. Adding this share of the yearly interest, therefore, to the above figures, it will be seen that the real deficit on the railways was £27½ millions in 1904, and, all construction not urgently necessary having been stopped, £15½ millions in 1905, not counting war costs.

From 1889, when the State owned only a quarter of the mileage, to 1902, when it owned three-quarters, and when the line to Port Arthur was opened, the railway system was extended from 16,500 to 36,000 miles; and, during this period, the Budgets showed a total excess of expenditure amounting to about £34 millions, without including extraordinary expenditure on construction. Since then, the loss has rapidly increased. M. Witte has repeatedly claimed that, during the middle period of his administration, the years 1895–9, a series of surpluses was earned by steady economies. The claim has apparently no solid base; and it must be said, without entering upon the details of what has been matter of heated controversies, that M. Witte's statements on financial affairs have been frequently proved to be disingenuous and untrustworthy. More recently, however, he has himself posed as an economist and a critic of the prodigal expenditures on strategic lines. This is the great pit into which the moneys borrowed from Western Europe or wrung out

of the poverty-stricken peasantry have been thrown. The whole system is, indeed, open to grave objection. Russia needs railways, and the unification of the tariffs, which has proceeded along with State purchase, has been a great advantage. But an oligarchic State cannot make an honest and efficient proprietor or operator of great commercial undertakings; and, even if it had exhibited in this instance honesty and efficiency, it has ignored the first need of the country during this period —that of stern economy and moderation in the extension of its business machinery. The fever of railway building has, within living memory, inflicted great loss upon free and wealthy America; in poor and enslaved Russia its consequences have been much more serious. In this case, too, there has been some detrimental influence upon existing means of water transit and transport, which should rather have been encouraged.

When we pass from the area where some hope of commercial advantage can be entertained, however, and consider that most of the new expenditure in recent years has been on military lines which cannot substantially contribute to the wealth of the country and are likely always to work at a loss, we realize the logic of oligarchic capitalism. The Siberian line, with its Manchurian branches, extended to about 5,500 miles—about one-seventh of the whole State system—and had cost, up to 1902, about £85 millions. At the outbreak of the war it had probably already realized M. Witte's expectation that it would cost over one hundred millions sterling, or about one-seventh of the public Debt of the Empire, by the time the line round Lake Baikal was constructed. A few years ago, this undertaking was advertised to the world as a supreme embodiment of autocratic wisdom. M. Witte, who now again poses as an economist and a reformer, travelled to Dalny in

1902, and set the note for a new chorus of gratulation. Englishmen who ought to have known better helped to glorify it as a material achievement and an agency of civilization. Globe-trotters who only learned of the massacre of Blagovestchensk *after* they had enjoyed the hospitality of the authors of that battue, and who could hardly be expected to understand the needs of the peasantry, or even of trade and commerce, solemnly discussed the latest traffic statistics or the inexorable demand for an outlet to the warm water. Recent events relieve me of the obligation to discuss these topics. The Japanese have cut off the head of this monster which, conceived in greed and born in corruption, had devoured too many humble lives before the final crime of the war was added to the account. The iron mammoth of Siberia, the great pet of Nicholas II., even more distinctly than the new Navy, which, also, I need not discuss because its first trial has proved fatal, is typical of his reign, typical of gigantic waste, venality, and selfishness in a hundred directions. To-day, the ghostly fingers of thousands of exiles, dead on the highway of sorrow, are pointed in scorn at the unhappy youth who thought he could keep the forces of nature and humanity alike bound to the wheels of his conquering chariot.

But his Imperial Majesty may still boast that he is, among other not wholly admirable things, the biggest publican in the world. Liquor, at any rate, yields the oligarchy a handsome profit. In its whole Budget, in fact, drink and debt are the only conspicuously expansive items. The former brings in to the State more than the whole normal cost of the Army and Navy in time of peace (men are cheap in Holy Russia!), with the Orthodox Church and the Grand Ducal households thrown in. This might be tolerable if the ideas

which Messrs. Rowntree and Sherwell have so admirably enunciated in England had any hold upon the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. Some small pretence is, indeed, made of subsidizing popular entertainments out of the profits of the drink traffic; but for the Finance Minister to attempt really to use the largest item of his income for its own extinction would be plain suicide. What on earth would the oligarchy do if the *mujik* were suddenly to turn teetotaler?

CHAPTER XI

THE TARIFF

HERE, then, is the Imperial train—a modern engine driven by a Witte, before an iron-clad Pullman car, whose occupants quake and quarrel behind drawn blinds, and in the rear an ancient brake guarded by a Plehve or a Trepov. It is a formidable concern just so long as it preserves the sanctity of Juggernaut. Once seen as it really is, no army of police, no lines of soldiery, can protect it.

M. Witte's record in the domain of financial and commercial administration is well known, and I shall deal only with its results, which, though of fundamental importance, are little understood outside his own country. Three years younger than the rival officer whom he has survived, and, like him, of humble German origin, he has been successively Director of Railways, Minister of Ways and Communications, Minister of Finance, and President of the Committee of Ministers, this last post being the solatium given him in 1903 when his ten years' control of the finances of the Empire was brought to an end through Plehve's influence. He has constantly posed, and has often been complacently accepted in this country, as a Liberal, a rather absurd misnomer. His huge transactions, most of them mischievous, burdensome, and perilous in a high degree, would have been utterly impossible in a State even mildly democratic.

He is, of course, no policeman and no cleric; but we shall see that the man who provides ways and means for the auto-bureaucracy, however specious his methods —or rather just because of his resourcefulness and enterprise in this respect—is as dangerous an enemy of the people as the mere policeman or priestly inquisitor. He is the enemy of the people no less because, in the end, he proves the destruction of his partners and employers. The ancient brake may become unworkable; it can be dropped. If the engine runs away, leaves the line, or explodes, the Imperial train is done for. Steam is a good servant, a bad master; and so it is with the economic forces which M. Witte has evoked and attempted to bind to the service of the oligarchy. Had the whole powers of the nation been called to the task, they might have been controlled and turned to the common good. In a few selfish and incompetent hands, they have run riot and converted tyranny into anarchy. High Protectionism has produced an irresistible Labour movement. State monopoly, perpetual borrowing, and class privilege have led straight to a hopeless war; and between war and revolution the authors of both find themselves helpless and friendless. Russians of every class feel to-day as they never felt before the stupidity of the Governmental *régime* which they have borne with such extraordinary patience. This power of endurance, which is the most striking national characteristic, has carried them almost as far as is possible; and long before Father Gapon appeared you might hear in Moscow and Odessa and St. Petersburg, not among students and artisans merely, but among solid commercial men, words of disgust and disillusionment, words of incipient revolt, which were, on such lips, a new and ominous phenomenon.

During the last social upheaval, the revolutionary

crisis of twenty-five years ago, industrial capitalism was a new feature in the national life, and one of comparatively trifling importance. Ten years of M. Witte witnessed a sweeping change in the economic activities of the country. While one arm of the State was busy with the process of Imperial expansion that led to the conflict with Japan, the other arm was engaged in building a tariff wall round the Western frontiers, and in planning other high Protectionist measures, intended to make the country self-sufficing in manufactures as well as in the supply of food and raw materials. Elsewhere the "trust," mischievous as it may be, is a natural revulsion from the anarchy of capitalistic competition, and may be controlled by a constitutional Government. In Russia it is a direct instrument of the despotic State, run for the benefit of the State and a small class of magnates. Beside the railway and drink monopolies many lesser "trusts" combine to produce a thoroughly artificial and unstable condition of commerce and industry. The results of this programme, aggravated by the suppression of education and all other free activity, are becoming plainly visible. Bankruptcy follows bankruptcy; credit is falling to the vanishing point; the great towns teem with unemployed; and, unless there be a radical change of policy, the bankruptcy of the State itself is only a question of time.

What are the permanent conditions to which the rottenness of the fabric of Russian trade and industry is due? It arises from the Autocratic-Protectionist design of creating a number of great manufactures by artificial process, at the cost of the general community, including the working classes, for the benefit of a small capitalist and landlord class and of the State exchequer. In no European country has the Protectionist idea been

carried out so unmercifully. During the preceding twenty years there had been various advances in this direction. Thus in 1877 all duties became leviable in gold, which was equivalent to an all-round increase of 30 per cent. In 1881 an addition of 10 per cent. was made, and sectional increases were afterwards declared. So far, however, foreign half-worked and raw materials came in free, or under moderate Protection. In the last great tariff revision, that of 1891, the year of the great famine, the duties, already high, were put up, on the average, 20 per cent.; and now raw materials pay 28 per cent., manufactured goods 27 per cent. (rising in some cases to over 100 per cent.), and food imports no less than 75 per cent. of their values. The result is what might have been expected—Russia is ill-clad, ill-furnished, ill-equipped in her fields, factories, and mines, in transit and transport, in all the mechanism of her commercial life. The land which might be among the richest in Europe is actually the poorest and most hopeless.

"Russia," says another of her official reporters,* "has been generously provided by nature with food and the necessaries of manufacture. It could, and should, become absolutely independent of foreign supplies for all its needs, and, while continuing to be the granary of Eastern Europe, it could supply the raw and half-manufactured material required throughout Europe, thanks to its exceptionally favourable local conditions. To attain this end, the Government has entered upon the way of positive Protectionism, and it has persisted resolutely for twenty years past." Such was the programme. Now let me quote from this same official report a typical result. Raw cotton and cotton yarns are subject to very high duties. The total consumption

* "General Results of Industry" by M. N. Langovoy, in "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century."

of the raw stuff is given at 240,000 tons, of which only a third is native product. "The opinion that the Russian Protectionist system weighs heavily upon the population, and costs the Russian much more than the foreigner, in a general way, cannot but be regarded as justified," M. Langovoy admits; and he adds this instructive calculation: "One hundred kilos of Russian cotton print (common Indian quality) may be valued at 210 roubles; while this article, were it not for import duties, could be obtained from abroad for about 150 roubles. The Russian consumer, therefore, pays to-day about 60 roubles more than the stuffs are worth, and, the consumption being 205,000 tons, the total over-payment amounts to the very respectable sum of 123 millions of roubles." That is to say, the half-starved *mujik* is taxed to the tune of twelve and a half millions sterling yearly for the benefit of the cotton lords, on the pretence that some day or other this parasitic trade will be efficient enough to compete fairly with Manchester, which at present can buy cotton in Alabama, manufacture it, and deliver it on the Russian cotton-fields at three-quarters of the price of the native article!

It may be asked how it comes about that the Russian Government allows its official writers to advertise such folly. Oddly enough, this, also, is a result of the Witte system, which seeks to pave the way for further Western loans by participating, at great cost, in international exhibitions, maintaining, also at great cost, foreign financial representatives, and issuing elaborate reports on the expansion of Russian industry and commerce. Some of these officials are delightfully innocent persons. M. Langovoy, for instance, supports the admission I have just quoted by an argument which is so exquisite a specimen of Protectionist ineptitude that

I cannot refrain from summarizing it.* The Russian consumer pays 123 million roubles a year more for his cotton stuffs than they are worth; and, still, it is worth while, this writer thinks, because large agricultural and industrial interests are thus maintained. There is the cotton cultivation, the product of which is estimated at 35 million roubles, and there is the cost of manufacture, which is estimated at 123 millions—exactly the amount of the over-payment already noted. Finally, the Treasury gets 30 millions in customs duties. The total cost of production of 205,000 tons of cotton tissue is, therefore, 188 million roubles. But the consumer pays for it, according to M. Langovoy, 430½ millions, so that the manufacturers, thanks to the Protectionist system, apparently carry away in profit 242½ millions, or one-third more than the whole cost of production, raw material, and labour included.

This fact is significant enough; but the chief gem of M. Langovoy's collection lies in the domain of fancy, and has no stain of material reality about it. If the tariff barrier is removed, he says, the consumer will, it is true, pay only 307½ millions for his cotton stuffs, but this will go to the foreigner, and it will be 65 millions more than the 242½ millions of profit now paid to Russian manufacturers, and, therefore, a national loss of that amount! So, you see that by paying 123 millions a year more than you need, you really gain 65 millions a year, and you have in addition the inestimable joy of maintaining national industries! Hundreds of thousands of cotton growers and textile hands give their year's labour, and the nation gives the manufacturers in addition a profit of 242½ millions, when, for a trifle more, they could get the whole of the cotton stuff they want without moving a muscle. You

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 289, 290.

put 430 millions into the Protectionist machine, and you get 188 millions out; and even of this latter sum 30 millions goes into the Exchequer, to pay for a hated police, an unnecessary war, and, incidentally, for the writing of a volume which, though for boldness of imagination it puts Mr. Chamberlain's modest essays and even Mr. Seddon's myth of the "golden sovereigns" to shame, can hardly be expected to impress the cold-blooded financiers of the Western world.

No wonder, under an elaborately organized system of fiscal lunacy like this, that a few industries grow, as predatory enterprise always will when it gets such a glorious chance. There is loss as well as gain to the manufacturers themselves, though the chief sufferers are the masses of the people. Everywhere the double influence of the tariff is felt. The high duties on coal stimulate mining, and hamper manufacture. The high duties on raw cotton stimulate growing in Central Asia, and burden the Moscow factories, which depend on American raw material. The high duties on machinery benefit a few trades, and arrest agriculture and manufacture in general. The following table will show that, where there is growth, it has lain much more considerably on the side of capital than on that of labour.

	Factories and workshops in 1897.	Value of product. Millions of roubles.		Number of workers. Thousands.	
		1887.	1897.	1887.	1897.
Textiles	4,449	463	946	399	642
Food products	16,512	375	648	205	255
Mines and metallurgy ...	3,412	156	393	390	544
Metal manufactures ...	2,412	112	310	103	214
Pottery and glass	3,413	28	82	67	143
Chemicals	769	21	59	21	35
Wood manufactures ...	2,357	25	102	30	86
Total (including other industries) ...	39,029	1334	2839	1318	2098

To these details, it may be added that the chief industrial region is that of Moscow and the Middle Volga, the second that of St. Petersburg and the Baltic provinces, the third that of Poland, the fourth that of Ekaterinoslav and the South, after which follow the Black Earth zone, the Ural and Eastern provinces, Kiëv and the South-West, Baku and the Caucasus, Kharkov and Little Russia.

In Russia, as elsewhere, ultra-Protectionism is the result of a hungry Exchequer and a hungry governing class; but in this instance while decidedly hindering the development of foreign trade, it has not stopped the "invasion" of the home market. What it has done, beside inflicting a fearful burden on the consumer, is to obstruct the natural repayment of exports by imports, and to cause a steadily increasing outward drain of wheat in satisfaction of foreign loan and investment charges. It must not be supposed that the foreign trade of the Empire has always borne its present artificial character, or that it was stationary till M. Witte took it under his care. During the first quarter of the last century, which included more years of war than of peace, it grew by 57 per cent.; in the second quarter, under a mildly protective tariff, by 59 per cent. In the third quarter it advanced enormously, "thanks to the great reform of February 19, 1861, which allowed 23 millions of human beings freed from serfdom to exploit the natural wealth of the country to their own profit and that of the State; thanks also to the beneficent public and administrative reforms which were the logical consequences of the emancipation, and also to the rapid extension of railways." * The high tariff dates from 1877. From the

* "Foreign Commerce," by M. B. Pokrovsky, in "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century," p. 688.

beginning of the century foreign commerce had then multiplied tenfold; in the following generation it increased only by one quarter. From the average of 1861–5 to that of 1871–5, when the tariff was about one-third as heavy as at present, exports rose from 225 to 470 million roubles, imports from 206 to 565 million. No subsequent decade can offer such a record as this; and a glance at the details of the more recent figures will show that, while on the one side the main feature is the forced exports of corn, on the other the country is now under the need of buying large quantities of raw and manufactured materials at higher prices than before.

Year.	Food-stuffs.	Raw and half-manufactured materials.	Animals.	Manufactured articles.	Total.
	£ Millions Sterling				
Exports.					
1898	46,049,918	25,328,512	1,790,206	2,151,881	75,320,517
1899	33,690,600	26,554,000	1,833,343	1,844,500	63,922,443
1900	40,504,650	28,682,000	1,901,000	2,071,000	73,158,650
1901	45,793,750	27,253,125	2,146,250	2,326,875	77,520,000
1902	55,906,519	27,439,807	2,292,662	2,046,693	87,685,681
1903	63,250,306	33,190,587	2,148,697	2,277,466	100,867,056
Imports.					
1898	7,418,375	32,089,019	160,544	20,037,368	59,714,306
1899	7,803,106	32,021,200	191,462	23,147,200	63,162,968
1900	8,476,627	32,361,518	120,700	19,868,855	60,827,700
1901	8,850,625	30,260,000	148,750	16,341,250	55,600,625
1902	8,649,706	31,395,069	149,068	15,810,000	56,003,843
1903	9,250,762	36,420,163	152,350	18,071,318	63,904,593

In 1903 22·9 % of the exports came to the United Kingdom, and 24·4 to Germany; while of the imports 18·6 % were British, and 39·1 German.

Notwithstanding the *régime* in which M. Langovoy glories, in spite of a tariff which, for the first time, penalized minerals, coal, and cotton, and doubled and even quadrupled the duties on cotton and linen thread and on iron, £11 millions worth of raw cotton,

£1,300,000 of raw wool and wool yarn, £1½ millions of wool, cotton, and flax manufactures, £2,290,000 worth of coal and coke, £1,300,000 of dye-stuffs and paints, £1 million worth of iron and steel goods, £1,376,000 of chemicals, and nearly £6 millions' worth of machinery had to be imported in 1903, all at greatly enhanced prices. In that year the Customs duties amounted to £25½ millions—about 11 per cent. of the revenue of the State, and considerably more than one-third of the value of the whole importation. The total product of the chief industries tabled on page 150, at the rate of progress there shown, must have amounted, in 1903, to at least £350 millions; and, bearing in mind M. Langovoy's calculation, it seems probable that the artificial appreciation due to the Protectionist system amounts to one-quarter of this amount. It is not extravagant to say, therefore, that the tariff costs the Russian people, on imports and native production together, considerably more than a hundred millions sterling yearly—or ten times as much as the direct taxes of the Empire—of which enormous sum three-quarters goes into the pockets of private capitalists, and the remainder goes to the State, to be spent on war and the up-keep of the oligarchy.

There is one other considerable and characteristic result of the Protectionist system which must be indicated—the growth of absentee capitalism. Labour cannot escape the tariff; money can easily cheat it by setting up its agents inside the line of 259 customs houses on the Western frontier. In part this is, of course, a genuine benefit to native industry. Some of the chief manufactures of the Empire have been established by foreigners. The great metal works established a generation ago by John Hughes in an uninhabited place in the province of Ekaterinoslav, now called

Jusovo (*i.e.* Hughes-ovo; the Russians have forgotten the original name, but sometimes come as near to it as "Youth"), where 10,000 hands are employed, was the first of its kind. A French Company started iron mining and founding in the South; other like cases could be cited. In diffusing technical knowledge, creating new industrial centres, giving an example of initiative and enterprise, and also, as an official writer naïvely observes, of human conditions of labour, these foreign concerns have exercised a salutary influence. If their increase in numbers and importance were a natural development, the outflow of capital profits would be so much less considerable an item than the gain to the native labourer and consumer that it would not call for special notice. But we have seen above that, under Russian Protectionism, the reward of the manufacturer is infinitely larger than that of the producers of raw material and the factory workers put together; and, in these cases, most of this larger share goes abroad in the shape of dividends, or of wheat and other native produce which pays those dividends. It has been estimated that 20 per cent. of the capital of registered companies in the Empire belongs to foreigners. These enterprises constitute a large and probably an increasing part of the manufactures on the growth of which the official statisticians go into rhapsodies; they include especially British, French, Belgian, and American metal works in the South, German foundries and factories in Poland, French, British, and Belgian metal works in the Ural, Swedish and British oil companies in the Caspian and Black Sea regions, German textile factories in Poland, water, tramways, gas and electric-light companies in the large towns. Forty-five foreign metal companies and fifteen oil companies alone engage about £25 millions of nominal capital, and distribute over a

million sterling a year in dividends. They multiply, despite the thousand annoyances of life under the Tsardom, because nowhere else can such an opportunity of safe and easy exploitation be found. Without them there would be little or no increase of industry to boast of, but it would not serve the purpose of M. Witte and his successors and partners to admit that their success marks the failure of their "national" policy.

We need not wonder, then, either that industrialism is growing in the Empire, or that agriculture is stagnant, the yield being less than in any other European country; that the factory workers in these very protected trades work longer hours for lower wages than their fellows in any Western country; that for years past there has been serious commercial depression, and that year after year the Finance Minister has to issue warnings against excessive speculation. No wonder, with iron at three times the English price, that manufacture and agriculture are handicapped. The export of corn grows, and the home consumption, already remarkably low, has actually fallen in recent years. The national beverage, tea, costs 4*s*. a pound, and the consumption per head is less than one-sixth of the English average. While Russian bountied sugar was being "dumped" in London (until our own Protectionists determined to save us from the curse of cheap imports!) it was a luxury doled out three lumps at a time in the Moscow restaurants.

This sugar monopoly, which is strictly regulated and directed from beginning to end by the Government in collusion with the great beet-growers, exhibits yet another development of predatory industrialism. It is the subject of perpetual official pride, and M. Witte, in a Note addressed in July, 1902, to the Powers signatories of the Brussels Anti-Sugar Bounties Convention, claimed

that its object was "to regulate the amount sold on the home market, in order to obviate the evils of over-production and to increase its consumption in Russia." A short examination of the facts of this triumphant example of the Witte policy, beside showing that these two claims are the reverse of the truth, will give an enlightening glimpse of the oligarchy in its capacity of industrial monopolist.*

Although it is more than a century since the first sugar factory was established in the Empire, it is only in the last twenty-five years that the native supply has exceeded the native demand. The area under beetroot in 1903 amounted to 1,390,000 acres, the largest in the world, and more than one-third larger than that of Germany; but it is significant that Germany's production of sugar was one-and-a-half times greater. Last year the area sown was somewhat smaller; but the crop is still one of very considerable importance, about two-thirds being grown by private cultivators, and the rest by the manufacturers. Russian soil is very favourable to it, both in yield of beet and in its high saccharine value. The crop is officially estimated to engage a yearly total of 44 million labour-days, of a value to the labourers of 15½ to 22 million roubles; this type of agricultural labour is, therefore, apparently valued at from tenpence to thirteen pence a day! In 1890 there were 222 sugar factories at work, 268 in 1899, and 275 in 1903; but the output has more than doubled in the same period.

Up to 1895 the sugar manufacturers formed an unofficial ring, the operating centre of which was the

* In what follows I am indebted to the essay on "The Sugar Industry," by M. P. Tchefranoff, in "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century," and the Reports of the British Consuls at Odessa for 1892 and St. Petersburg for 1895 and 1903.

Kiëv Exchange. On the least pretext of crop-shortage or over-export they put up prices, and kept them up, as our Consul said, "without any consideration for the poor peasantry, who are thereby debarred from using sugar unless on very rare occasions." They were, if you please, "tired of receiving dividends less than 30 or 40 per cent.," and so had formed a syndicate, "which, in turn, conceived the plan of exporting the surplus production at a considerable loss, in order to keep up the price of the much larger quantity consumed in the country. To each factory is, therefore, allotted a limit as to its percentage of home requirements; all sugar produced over and above that limit had to be exported at whatever price it might bring. Every one knew such a plan was bound to raise the price of sugar." But there was "a saving clause inserted in the agreement of the syndicate to the effect that, should the price rise above 4 roubles 50 kopeks per pood (£1 7*s.* per cwt.), then export was to cease, and foreign sugar was to be admitted duty-free. As expected, the operation of the syndicate raised the dividends of sugar factories; but the arrangement to guard the interests of the general consumer has been forgotten."

Such was the system from 1887 until M. de Witte put himself at the head of the syndicate in 1895. The object of the newly modelled ring was roundly declared by our Consul in St. Petersburg to be "further protecting the interests of the Russian sugar manufacturer, or, in other words, artificially bolstering up the price of native-grown sugar in the country." The only fundamental change was that all owners of sugar-works were now compelled to join the syndicate, of which the Minister of Finance became director-in-chief. It became, in fact, a State monopoly of enormous size and

power, worked by an autocratic Minister directly for the benefit of the State and the favoured capitalists at the cost of the nation. The number of factories and their production was not directly limited, but sales on the home market were limited to 19,286 cwts. per factory, and were subjected to payment of an excise duty of 1 rouble 75 kopeks per pood (11*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.), this duty being rebated on quantities exported. Each year the Finance Minister was to estimate in advance the quantity of home consumption. The quantity produced by all the factories over and above this amount was then constituted a reserve stock and divided into two parts—a permanent portion, which could only be liberated with Ministerial sanction when prices had reached a certain level (£1 13*s.* 10*d.* per cwt. in September–December, 1895), and a disposable portion, which could be exported freely, but could only be sold on the home market on payment of double excise duty (at that time, £1 3*s.* 4*d.* per cwt.).

Imagine the power of the man at the head of such a trust! He has the whole coercive machinery of the State behind him. He determines, without appeal, home supplies and home prices, the amount and disposal of reserve stocks; and in these decisions he affects directly the condition of millions of consumers, hundreds of thousands of peasant cultivators, and thousands of factory hands. The whole of the manufacturing class is reduced to a servile position; it is encouraged, even compelled—this is the whole *raison d'etre* of the system—to sell dear at home and cheap abroad. The pretence of limiting over-production was a mere pretence; in 1903 the surplus amounted to over 10 per cent. The pretence of cheapening supplies was a piece of gross hypocrisy; that object could have been obtained immediately by freeing the trade from restriction. The

whole aim of the system is to maintain a permanent corner relieved by free exports and supported by a prohibitive tariff against foreign imports. The cost of production, which stood at about 2*d.* per pound ten years ago, is now down to 1½*d.*; but it is not the *mujik* or the town workman who benefits. While the home consumption increased from 19 million quintals in the five years ending 1893, to 24 millions in 1894–8, the exports nearly doubled in that period, and in 1903 they amounted to actually double the export of the previous year, or 240,000 tons. The annual consumption in Russia at the same time was 18 lbs. per head, about one-fifth of that of the United Kingdom, where no beet is grown and no sugar extracted; and while we were paying in London 6*s.* per cwt. for Russian sugar, the Russian people were paying between three and five times that sum for their own produce. But, to do M. de Witte and his co-partners full justice, we must remember that in 1902 sugar brought into the Exchequer about £8,500,000, and that it is budgetted to produce almost as much in the present year of disaster, 1905.

CHAPTER XII

A SICK SOCIETY

THE results of the long-continued obscurantism we have now traced, aggravated by the mobilization, the depression of trade, and finally by the effects of a cold spring and a dry summer, were seen last year in a failure of crops and extreme suffering in many of the richest corn-growing lands of the Empire. Nor is there the slightest possibility of any improvement in the economic position of the peasantry in the early future, while unfavourable climatic conditions would precipitate a calamity such as has repeatedly clouded the life of Russia during the last generation. The recurrence of famine is, after all, the chief count in the indictment of the Tsardom. The six bad harvests of the period 1873–89 were confined to certain portions of the country, that of 1873 mainly affecting Samara and the eastern provinces, that of 1875 the south, and those of 1880, 1885, 1886, and 1889 being local. In the years 1891 and 1896 the failure of crops was widespread, and amounted to a national disaster. It has sometimes been suggested that famine in Russia is, and will always be, inevitable under present physical and climatic conditions. That is mere moonshine. If the Government had shown the same ingenuity and enterprise in developing agriculture that they have shown in nursing parasitic industries, had spent on technical education what has

gone into the purse of the Holy Synod, had extended irrigation as they have extended railways, had invested in the care of forests and the improvement of crops and cattle what they have put into the drink trade, there would be no talk of famine to-day.

Instead, the peasants have been of deliberate policy kept in a condition of degrading ignorance and subservience, so that years must elapse ere they are able to use the better machinery and methods available; and the *zemstvos*, those provincial councils in which lay the only hope of a better organization of rural life, have been disabled and forbidden to carry out plans of education and assistance. The food of the *mujik* is always meagre enough, and so narrow is the taxable margin, even in good times, that, as we have seen, every now and then immense arrears have to be wiped out by an act of royal "clemency." In the rapid and costly extension of the railway system there has always been held out the double object of internal development and external "defence." By far the greater part of the millions that have been spent in this way have gone in building confessedly "strategic" lines, but the pretence of helping agriculture has always been kept up. The export of cereals has indeed been greatly assisted—a dubious boon, except to the great landlords. But the present situation well illustrates the antagonism of the two aims. If peace could have been maintained for, say, half a century to come, the Trans-Siberian line, though it would probably still have failed to pay for itself, would have greatly stimulated the exploitation of the virgin territories through which it runs. As it is, it has been worse than a "white elephant"; it has actually been the means of setting back Siberian life to a point from which it will take a generation to recover.

While in Moscow last summer I had an exceedingly

interesting and enlightening talk with Mr. H. Cooke, the British commercial agent, who had recently returned from a very extensive journey through the agricultural regions of Asiatic Russia. He explained to me, among other things, the really remarkable growth of butter-making, an industry created, one may almost say, by the demands of the British market, but entirely dependent on the great railway. The first dairy producing for export was founded only ten years ago; there are now nearly two thousand establishments, and in four years the total amount despatched has increased from five to nearly a hundred millions of pounds. This is, of course, an exceptional record; as Mr. Cooke said in one of his recent reports, "Cheap and cumbrous commodities can hardly bear the charge of so long a land journey," while experience is fully justifying his remark that "the sea will probably hold its own in the carriage of all but valuable cargoes, perishable articles, and goods deliverable by fixed date." What the sea does for the produce of the Pacific coast, the rivers did for Siberian lumber and agricultural exports. But the competition of the railway has crippled the river traffic, steamboat services have been suspended or weakened, and energy has been diverted from the improvement of high roads to the hasty completion of a single line of railway, of which no serious student has much hope so far as goods traffic is concerned. When military exigencies put a complete stop to the use of this one means of communication, the economic severance of the two parts of the empire produced widespread loss, and an injury to credit that will long be felt. The agricultural development of Siberia was arrested at a stroke; and in Moscow, which depends very largely on the eastern trade, many branches of business were brought to a standstill, other effects of the war—the calling out of reserves, the requisitions of

cattle and forage, the stoppage of emigration, the rise of prices, the suspension of Government works, the general collapse of industrial employment—being thus specially aggravated.

I give this as an example of the way in which the policy of the Government tends to deepen the disabilities of the mass of the population, of which over 90 per cent. in Siberia and over 70 per cent. in European Russia are directly engaged in agriculture. It is an indirect effect, yet, when we think of what might have been done with these wasted millions, if the "Little Father" had been thinking of his own people, instead of the eastern swamps where hundreds of thousands of them have been fruitlessly sacrificed, we can by no means acquit the oligarchy of responsibility. But what is morally worse, if not in the issue more disastrous, is the existence of a domestic policy as to which it is almost impossible to resist the conclusion which I have heard argued that it is directly and deliberately designed to keep the people poor and ignorant. That at any rate is its result. The Saratoff *zemstvo* proposes to open peasant classes in rural economy; M. Plehve imposes his veto. The Koursk *zemstvo* decides to open a summer course of instruction for rural teachers; M. Plehve imposes his veto. The Voronej Agricultural Committee reports that the slow death of the Russian village is inevitable if the present system continues; its chief members are arrested and exiled. In other places the active members of the local governing bodies are simply removed, or confirmation of their appointment is refused, while the councils themselves are forbidden to undertake certain kinds of work or to co-operate with each other (lest, forsooth, they should lay the foundation of a larger representative structure); their most devoted servants are removed; necessary loans are refused to them, on the ground that

all the money available is needed for the war, a hypocritical pretext.

Where the central brain of a State is thus diseased all manner of minor evils inevitably accumulate. The inanities of the censorship, the unceasing petty tyranny of the police and other Government agents, the lack of legal security, are plagues of commercial, as well as professional and private life. Even worse is the, to British eyes, extraordinary corruption which pervades the whole fabric of official and sub-official society.

"Yes," said one of my friends, a man in an important administrative position, "you can hardly exaggerate this evil. Throughout officialdom, from the Baltic dockyards, where millions disappear mysteriously and it takes months to get a fleet to sea, to far Dalny—which, you know, is nicknamed Lishny, 'The Not-wanted'—corruption is universal. You have seen it yourself in little things—any merchant will tell you that half his profits go in backsheesh—but you can hardly imagine the boldness of swindling that permeates the whole of our society. Look at that splendid hotel opposite. It was an insignificant affair a year or two ago, but fire came opportunely to the aid of the proprietors, and this new palace has been built out of the insurance money.

"Look at this map of the Siberian Railway. Do you notice anything curious here, and here, and here? Take this one case: Tomsk is the capital of Siberia, its only intellectual centre, the seat of government and of a great university. But the main line passes it by at a distance of sixty miles. Why? Because the local authorities would not give the engineers the bribes they demanded! For a long time you had to get off at a wayside station—Taïga—and drive those sixty miles. At last a branch line had to be built. Oh, I am not talking scandal; I can give you the names, which I got

on the spot. And this is only one case out of many. You may have heard the history of our great Moscow Cathedral, the Temple of the Saviour, which took sixty years to build, during which time the funds disappeared several times over. The same thing happened with the Alexander II. Memorial Church in St. Petersburg. No one is punished for these things. How can you expect it, when every official is understood to have his price, and the connection of the Tsar's land speculations on the Yalu with the origin of the war is matter of common gossip? The war—well, war is always the great opportunity of the swindler. If we are robbed on every hand in times of peace, what wonder that in time of war ammunition is missing, ships are unseaworthy, and fraudulent contractors make easy fortunes while our soldiers wade through the marshes of Manchuria in paper boots, and starve for lack of proper food? If the holy icons do not protect our churches from pillage, how can they protect the charity sent to the wounded and dying on the battlefield? But perhaps you do not know the story of the Red Cross Fund?"

I had, in fact, already heard something of this scandal. A series of abuses in the Red Cross Society had come to light. A prominent member of its executive committee had given in his resignation, ostensibly on account of health, really, as was perfectly well known, because large sums for which he was responsible were missing, and it was understood that he had spent them in financial speculation. In Moscow the president of the local committee, Mme. Vishnyevska, and her husband and the office staff had been relieved of their duties on account of the discovery of "grave irregularities and disorders." Even by themselves these events would have excited some feeling, for, as my friend said, if people will steal Red Cross money, what will they not do? But these were

not solitary cases. From the provinces came rumours of trials, of course with closed doors, of functionaries guilty of various kinds of fraud. At Odessa a highly decorated officer had been caught, with two accomplices, selling exemptions from military service. At Vilna a lieutenant-colonel and an hospital doctor had been convicted on a like charge. At Tomsk there was a remounts scandal after the South African model. At Irkutsk a lieutenant-colonel had been cashiered for selling contracts. In Moscow a prison inspector, who was a captain of reserves and a member of the petty nobility well known in society, had forged the signature of the Governor to bills amounting to over seven thousand pounds. And so on.

When a second series of abuses in the Red Cross Society was revealed, a tremor of shame and alarm ran through the educated classes of the Empire. This time the offenders were of higher rank: it was Prince Golitzin and Count Lanskoy who had failed to account for moneys received by them for the equipment of hospitals and other methods of relief. Nothing could now be regarded as safe; distrust spread like a flame. The zemstvos tried to keep the administration of their relief funds in their own hands. M. Plehve suppressed their tentatives of independence, but he could do nothing to restore confidence in the society which had at its head the Dowager Empress and the Tsar himself, whose funds before the war amounted to over a million sterling, and which engaged the loyal support of 20,000 members enrolled in over 500 branches. "The one truly enormous treasure which enables the Red Cross ceaselessly to extend its action," says a Government report that lies before me, "is the confidence it inspires in Russian society, in all the brave hearts of Russia. Till now Russia has recompensed the Red Cross all its expenditure, and it

will always do so, for there is no reason to suppose that this firm support will ever be lacking." Alas! for official prophecies. One day—I had the story from more than one trustworthy mouth—the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, startled by the rumours that reached her, decided to apply a test. A load of Red Cross supplies on which she and her assistants had been busy was to leave by that day's train for the Far East. Arrived at the station, she was shown the van duly laden with boxes and packages. Were they quite sure——? Oh, certainly! But the lady was not easily to be put off. She would have some of the boxes opened ere she could quite believe. Needs must, and so they were opened. Some were empty, others full of straw and bricks! The story goes that the Grand Duchess burst into tears. It is a slow and painful process, this of Russia's awakening; and there are those I pity more than the Grand Duchess.

Official venality is a very ancient evil in the Empire of the Tsar. Gogol pilloried it in "The Revisor," but it was already hardy enough to outlive the cruelest satire. "The administration, the finances, the army, all the departments of the public service," says Leroy-Beaulieu, "are a prey to embezzlement, bribery, fraud, corruption, under all its forms. Like a deadly virus spreading throughout the entire social anatomy, administrative corruption has poisoned all its organs, altered all their functions, enervated all their powers." If this was true ten years ago, much more so is it to-day, under the feeblest monarch Russia has had for a century past. There are, of course, some small compensations. Jew and Nonconformist buy a little of the immunity the law denies to them. The prisoner with means buys the little comforts that would otherwise be lacking. The wheels of many à Circumlocution Office are oiled,

the strangling coil of red tape often loosened, by a bribe which is often regarded as a necessary supplement to an inadequate official salary. Perquisites are recognized by ancient custom, and go by regular scales. But the evil, beginning far back in the extortion of the alien adventurers who founded the bureaucracy, and easily sanctioned in a society based on serfdom, has grown in variety and extent till it is indeed a universal poison, till honesty in the public service is practicably impossible. It is aggravated by the fact that officials are virtually irresponsible, being above the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts and only open to prosecution by their superiors. It is aggravated, again, by the newer financial developments with which we are familiar in the West.

In the old governing hierarchy there is no corner that can be said to be free from this curse. The Court itself is tainted with the sordid influence of favourites and the strife of parties bent on personal aggrandizement. The Tsar is a millionaire many times over, perhaps the richest individual in the world, yet his hands are not clean in this respect, and there is hardly a *salon* that may not be polluted any day by the presence of some titled, wealthy, and influential swindler.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FINAL CRIME

On February 8, 1904, was struck, without the formal notice required by international law, the first blow in the first war between Great Powers that has been carried on under modern conditions. The usual kind of newspaper comment heralded this terrible event. The conflict of interests, we were told, had reached a point when no other "solution" was possible; and the early Japanese naval victories were described as "decisive." Yet it was as plain from the outset that this would be a long and disastrous struggle for both parties as that it was an unnecessary and unrighteous one. Another conclusion which emerged from an examination of the facts was that Great Britain made this war possible when she concluded the Japanese Treaty of 1902, and so lay under a secondary responsibility. Perhaps without foreseeing or intending it, we had made ourselves the chief ring-keeper in a monstrous duel from which neither party could really gain, and the whole world must suffer.

Let us anticipate some future "little Peterkin," and ask on what pretexts this calamity was brought about. The well-established facts of the development of the Far Eastern Question were usefully supplemented by statements of claim issued by Russian and Japanese authority respectively, and published two days after the outbreak

of hostilities. Looking back nine years to the day when Japan was ordered off the mainland of Asia by Russia, Germany, and France, we see the two present adversaries, a very old and a very young Power, both greedy for the heritage of East Asiatic suzerainty, watched by a group of States who thought it quite easy to coerce the new-comer, and quite impossible to do more than threaten the old giant who spread his arms out from the Bay of Finland to the Yellow Sea. Japan's humiliation was softened by the receipt of forty millions of Chinese money, but that was not enough. Preparations for war were masked under successive negotiations with the arch-enemy. While the Russian oligarchy hurried on their trunk railway, the Japanese oligarchy set to work to make a big army and a first-class navy. The rivals made compacts from time to time, and if breach of promise is in itself a good excuse for wholesale murder, the Mikado could offer a case for the war he started. In 1896, agreements signed at Seoul and Moscow constituted a mutual recognition of interests in Korea. In 1898, Russia obtained leases of Port Arthur and Talien-wan, and gave the world the best reason to conclude that they would be permanent, a mere synonym for possession. In the same year Russia recognized the commercial and industrial interests of Japan in Korea as predominant. In the autumn of 1900 she took steps which were regarded by Japan as a threat upon the Straits of Korea, and—a matter open to no misunderstanding—virtually occupied Manchuria under the pretext of helping to suppress the Boxers. Repeated pledges were given that the army should be withdrawn as soon as the pacification was accomplished, but, instead of withdrawal, the army was followed by the railway, and the railway by the virtual cession of a strip of land on either side. The giant had

got his grip; England and her fellows would, Japan could, do nothing.

Then came the great re-alignment of power, marked by the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, based upon the aim of "maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Korea, and of securing equal opportunities in those countries for the commerce and industry of all nations." The foes were now face to face, with England warning off the rest of the precious "Concert" in which she had played so ineffectual a part. Japan was not yet quite ready for the final struggle; but negotiations began to take a more urgent form. The Tsar appointed a "Viceroy of the Far East," and reports of the establishment of Russian posts on the Yalu and in Northern Korea hurried on the crisis. The proposals made by Japan in August, 1903, included the following chief points: "(1) A mutual engagement to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Chinese and Korean Empires. (2) A mutual engagement to maintain the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations in those two countries. (3) Reciprocal recognition of Japan's preponderating interests in Korea, and Russia's special interests in railway enterprises in Manchuria." In the end the only substantial question became that of Japan's demand for a definite treaty recognition of "the territorial integrity of China in Manchuria," and, as bearing upon this, the Russian proposal of a neutral zone in Northern Korea, a proposal in itself strongly suggestive of an intention on the part of Russia to continue in occupation of the borderland. Russia refused to give Japan any undertaking on the major point; but, on the eve of, or perhaps after, the stoppage of negotiations, intimated to the Powers

generally that "the Imperial Government, however, does not refuse, so long as the occupation of Manchuria lasts, to recognize both the sovereignty of the Bogdo Khan (Emperor of China) in Manchuria, and the privileges acquired there by the Powers through treaties with China." On neither side, in this contention, could it be said that there was one of the great moral issues that appeal irresistibly to the conscience; it was a clash of material ambitions, with, it is true, a balance of merit on one side, but without any redeeming touch of high and unselfish purpose on either. The interests of every possible and impossible party were discussed—except the inhabitants of Korea and Manchuria. If we ask whether the balance of merit in these opposed ambitions could not have been rectified by some less disastrous process, we are met by the fact that Japan openly refused to entertain any offer of mediation, this refusal being, in fact, only the natural climax of years of resolute preparation to fight for her own hand. Russian duplicity is only too well proved; but with Japan lies the responsibility of forcing on hostilities, when, with Great Britain and the United States in active sympathy, and France and Italy not ill-disposed, she could have appealed with confidence to The Hague Court for a verdict on the questions of fact and equity, and to an International Conference for joint action to give effect to that verdict. Not Japan and Russia and their foolish backers only, but every other civilized State in the world, probably now wish that this mild prescription had been given a trial.

It is no part of my plan here to trace the course of the hostilities, but I must endeavour to indicate their effect upon the mutual relations of the Russian Government, the Russian people, and the outside world. Perhaps the most painful fact of all is the proof this

fearful conflict has afforded of the insensibility of the great mass of people even in countries priding themselves on being the most highly civilized. Day after day, month after month, the tales of bloodshed have been poured out. A Russian battleship had been blown up with 700 of her crew; a Japanese transport, whose troops refused to surrender, was deliberately sunk; the fighting on the Yalu was followed by the disaster of Liao-Yang, the fall of Port Arthur by the yet greater *dèbacle* of Mukden, where 850,000 men were said to be engaged, Kuropatkin losing 26,500 killed, 40,000 prisoners, and 90,000 other casualties. Before this well-nigh unprecedented slaughter, the Russians were estimated to have lost 180,000 men and 50,000 prisoners, and the Japanese 125,000. Experience shows that figures like these have no more effect upon the average mind than the calculation of astronomical distances. Better a single picture such as this drawn by Tolstoy fifty years ago at Sevastopol:

"Hundreds of bodies, freshly smeared with blood, of men who two hours previous had been filled with divers lofty or petty hopes and desires, now lay, with stiffened limbs, in the dewy, flowery valley which separated the bastion from the trench, and on the level floor of the chapel for the dead; hundreds of men crawled, twisted, and groaned, with curses and prayers on their parched lips, some amid the corpses in the flower-strewn vale, others on stretchers, in cots, and on the blood-stained floor of the hospital. And still, as on the days preceding, the dawn glowed over Sapun Mountain, the twinkling stars paled, the white mist spread abroad from the dark sounding sea, the red glow illuminated the East, long crimson cloudlets darted across the blue horizon; and still, as on days preceding, the powerful, all-beautiful sun rose up, giving promise of joy, love, and happiness to all who dwell on earth."

But the Japanese war has produced no Tolstoy. People who had questioned De Bloch's account of the

deadliness of modern arms talk glibly of "the horrors of war"; but it may be doubted whether this is much more than a form of words. Pretty ladies, who would faint over a bleeding finger, discussed the latest cablegrams from the front without a tremor. Their own kith and kin were not concerned; and imagination is a blessing, or a curse, with which Nature seems unable to endow more than a few of her children. How, indeed, could we conceive even one of this rapid succession of horrors—say, the drowning of seven hundred able-bodied men in ten minutes? A single individual on the *Petropavlovsk*—the great realistic painter, Verestchagin—was known to us, and every one who has seen his pictures felt a certain sense of loss. The rest were mere cyphers; yet they, also, were human personalities—fathers and sons, with children and parents hungering for their return; good neighbours and hard workers, many of them, in field or factory, before they fell in the lottery of conscription; thinkers and artists, even, some of them; and sufferers all. Hardly one of them that had not some useful capacity or some welcome trait. Each had cost a mother and father years of labour and anxiety; each had just begun to repay the heavy debt, when he was seized for sacrifice in the devouring machine of the Tsardom. There was Paul, the Finnish lumberman, and Vasili from Libau, and Alexander the light-hearted, with his tales of Odessa and Constantinople, and hundreds more; enough of them for five or six whole villages, and every one a separate soul, whose worst sin was his obedience to a command no full-grown man will ever obey. One day the clique of land-grabbing ogres in St. Petersburg is challenged by another clique of much the same sort in Tokyo. The ogres know better than fight themselves; that part of the affair falls to the seven hundred, and thousands of other

too obedient village-fulls on both sides. There is a short respite; then—phut-ssh! a blaze and reek of hell-fire, and the seven hundred human bodies, once strong and beloved, are a cloud of bloody fragments, soon to be mercifully lost in the desert of waters, along with a million pounds' worth of wood and iron. How can we realize these things? If the manikin Tsar and his Court of ogres could fully realize one such horror, the world would be relieved of them at no greater cost than that of two or three new lunatic asylums. Consideration for human beings as such, as incarnate mysteries before the lowliest of whom we may well bow in sympathetic wonder, is, it is true, a sentiment rarely met with. Yet it is the foundation principle of Christianity, the *sine quâ non* of civilization.

In the political domain, however, the military collapse of the Russian oligarchy has already wrought a sweeping change. For months after the outbreak of hostilities the whole sentiment of Europe was enlisted on the side of Russia. The advertisements of the Siberian railway as an instrument of commerce and civilization were not yet forgotten; and the Tsar had not yet openly avowed, as he did with characteristic fatuity on the eve of the battle of Mukden, his intention of firmly establishing his naval power on the waters of the Pacific. The feeling that Russia had been unfairly surprised and must have full scope to vindicate her wounded prestige was reinforced by the general European dislike of the yellow race that had made so aggressive an entry upon the stage of world politics. Thus the St. Petersburg circular, refusing any attempt at mediation in May, 1904, passed without hostile notice. But as the record of defeat and humiliation lengthened, as the incapacity of the Russian Government to conduct the campaign was brought

into ever clearer contrast with the efficiency, vigour, and orderliness of the Japanese attack, the vague sympathy that follows the appearance of success veered round; and the fantastic movements of the new Baltic fleets before and after the episode of the Dogger Bank completed the transformation. To the sound British instinct which regarded the despotism not only as the cause of wholesale suffering at home but as a constant threat against the world's peace, there was now added a sense of the stupidity of this pretentious structure before which the world had so long bowed. It was seen that the Hull fishermen had to suffer because a distant Empire tolerated a government as incapable as it was inhumane. So long as this Baltic Fleet stayed at home, the stories of the jobbery and theft that accompanied its construction, the bigotry and ignorance amid which Russian officers are trained, the organized lawlessness of which the Russian people are the daily victims, did not touch us very nearly. So long as the Tsardom could preserve itself, the French bondholder did not trouble himself much about the wrongs of the *mujik*. But an oligarchy which can neither govern nor fight must no longer expect support even in the heartless world of the great money-lenders.

Thus, at last, considerations of business reinforce the feeble promptings of offended humanity. We hear no more interested appeals for an Anglo-Russian alliance. I have indicated my own criticism of our perilous treaty with Japan. But, beyond commercial and arbitration treaties, there can be no safe compact between free countries like France, the United States, and Great Britain, and the corrupt, cruel, and stupid class who are the present masters of Muscovy. A citadel of despotism is an offence and stumbling-block to all free men in every clime, as a State successfully

striving to grow up to the democratic ideal is an encouragement and hope for all humanity. Geographical conditions happily save us from any immediate danger of conflict with the Tsardom; but it has established a little army of spies in every great capital of Europe; it has poisoned the life of the Balkan States, of Persia, and of China by their intrigues; it has maintained upon his throne Abdûl the Assassin, with licence to slaughter the Armenians at will. It is, at least to some extent, responsible for the burden of armaments which lies upon the shoulders of the people of India; it has done its best to extinguish the liberal tradition in France, and to keep the Republic in a humiliating tutelage. The Dukhobors make good British colonists, and yet leave us ground to loathe their former oppressors. The hope of Whitechapel is that Russia should be freed, not that England's honourable gift of asylum should be revoked.

We have seen in preceding chapters that in any consideration of the future of Russia, in her internal and external relations, there are two minor factors—the Court and the *intelligenzia*—and five greater quantities to be reckoned with; on the one hand, the bureaucracy, including the police and the Orthodox priesthood; on the other, the peasantry and the town workmen; with the army at once joining and dividing the opposed forces of rulers and ruled. It is time that the main facts about the Russian army were more accurately appreciated. For generations it has been the bogey of neighbouring peoples, and it is now the bogey of those who most earnestly hope for the downfall of the system headed by Nicholas II. But there are grounds for believing that, as it has failed, and not for the first time, as an instrument of foreign aggression, so it will fail as an instrument of domestic oppression,

and that this double failure will complete a revolution of the utmost promise for the increase of peace and liberty in the world.

Externally, the fabric of Russian military power was more imposing on the eve of the Manchurian war than it had ever been. In ten years the normal expenditure on the army had increased by ten million pounds sterling a year, that on the navy by nearly seven millions. In the budget of 1904, the former stood at over £36,000,000 and the latter at £14,000,000, these sums not including the expense of the Siberian and other strategic railways. The navy was new, and both forces were newly armed. The army counted about a million men on a peace footing—about double the strength of the German army—and the Empire was supposed to be able to call out five or six millions in case of need. "If Russia made the same effort as certain other Powers of Western Europe," says a recent Governmental report, "she could without special effort maintain a permanent army of 2,500,000 soldiers. And as, further, the population of the Empire increases more rapidly than that of Western Europe, we may regard our reserve strength as absolutely inexhaustible." The financial exploits of M. Witte had given the Tsar a new war chest; the extension of railways on the Western frontier, in Central Asia, and in the Far East, though it had burdened the exchequer, was supposed to have doubled the striking power of the State. The Russian soldier was accounted among the best in the world;*

* "The Russian soldier has, perhaps, no equal. He combines the solidity of the German and the *elan* of the Frenchman; he has the sobriety of the Spaniard and the resignation of the Turk. He is at once the best disciplined, the most enduring, and the most ingenious and clear-headed. With the admirable adaptiveness in handicraft of his countrymen, he is at will a carpenter, a navvy, a blacksmith, always ready in all the tasks of war as of peace."—Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, "La France, La Russie, et L'Europe," p. 103.

and with such a weapon in hand, backed by an expert civil service, and untrammelled by democratic institutions, the Tsardom was supposed to be invincible. The state of Europe to-day, and of a large part of Asia as well, is proof that this was the opinion not only of scaremongering journalists, but of sober statesmen also. To official Russia we chiefly owe it that Europe has become an armed camp. It has afforded the only excuses for the perpetual militarist activity on the northern frontiers of India; more than one increase of the British Navy has been openly justified by the growth of the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. For ten years the whole policy of France has been diverted from its old libertarian aims, and enormous financial risks in the form of loans have been incurred, for the sake of a military alliance of which, if it had ever come into active operation, the whole penalty would have fallen upon the Republic, a discreditable bond she is only now beginning to shake off. The Dual Alliance has found its analogue in the Triple Alliance, and German militarism in particular has been confirmed and hardened by the combination of the two neighbouring Powers. Austria and the Balkan States have been kept in a turmoil of military preparation by constant fear of Russian designs; Sweden and Norway have been subjected to repeated alarms; and it seemed likely that there would be acute trouble over the advance of Russian influence in Persia, when Japan strode suddenly into the field, and pricked the bubble which had hypnotized all the nations of Europe.

This failure might have been foreseen, however, by any one acquainted with Russian history. It used to be said that Russia was beaten in the Crimea, not by the Allies, but by her own administration; and in the Turkish War the enormous efforts made in two

campaigns might have failed but for the Roumanians. The nation has made great advances since then; the State is in the main the same junta of men bent exclusively on maintaining their own power and property. Of themselves, the Russian people are hardy and resourceful, but decidedly less aggressive than the Teuton and Latin races. The *mujik* is proverbially capable of bearing suffering, and proverbially prone to alternations of heroic effort and stolid inactivity. The nomad instinct conspires with the absence of the territorial principle in recruiting to lessen the shock of departure for a distant field and the strain of long absence, but at the same time to enfeeble the spirit which is miscalled patriotism. He signally lacks the pride and combativeness of the Japanese, and their extraordinary chivalry of self-sacrifice. He is less quick and clever, more enduring and common-sensible. Trained from birth to obedience, passivity, co-operation, and poverty, under the despotism of his father, of the *mir*, and of the police, his lack of initiative is a much graver fault in modern than it was in earlier conditions of warfare. And it is aggravated by another weakness for which his rulers are responsible —his lack of instruction. At the census of 1887 it was found that two-thirds of the Russian and over four-fifths of the Polish soldiery could neither read nor write; and in 1895, out of nearly a million men who had attended the communal schools, only 24,000 had obtained the certificates entitling them to certain privileges in regard to military service. In high contrast with his German fellow, the Russian petty officer is usually very ignorant, and the direction of the army, thus lacking in intellectual reserves, tends to degenerate as a protracted campaign carries away draft after draft of its most instructed men. The oligarchy has found, when it is too late, that military railways and scientific fortifications are no substitute for

the common schools on which the money ought to have been spent.

"What the Russian soldier wants," said the great Polish banker and economist, Jean de Bloch, in his encyclopædic work on modern warfare,* "is to raise his individuality, his intelligence, his energy, his faculty for decision, his ingenuity, his perseverance in pursuit of the proposed ends." But what place is there for individuality and intelligence under the Russian system? As in the economic so in the military sphere, the Tsardom has provoked developments ultimately incompatible with its own power. "The development of the individuality of the soldier has become indispensable: the automaton is the worst possible agent in modern combat. It follows that the principle of obedience can no longer be the sole regulator of the relations between the officer and his subordinates. These relations formerly exacted only the unreasoned and blind execution of orders, stifling the moral qualities of the man, de-individualizing him, and developing in him the fear of his chief. Dragomirov has said that such fear should be removed by a system which will exclude arbitrariness on the part of officers as a crime. But the present military laws impose very severe penalties for slight offences. Such is that which consists in sending the offender into disciplinary companies, where he is submitted to corporal punishment for the least faults. A *régime* which sentences men to indefinite flogging, which allows them to be whipped every day, evidently invites abuses of authority. True, in time of peace, a soldier can only be sent to a disciplinary corps by virtue of a sentence; but in time of war, the head of

* "La Guerre," ii. 369, *et seq.* M. de Bloch's work and his interviews with the present Tsar were one of the influences that led to the summoning of The Hague Conference. Needless to say, the questions here discussed were not included in the Imperial programme.

the regiment can send him without any authorization whatever. Under obligatory service, however, it is not reassuring to the citizens called to the colours that they have something besides the fire of the enemy to face. The army of 1877–78 was not constituted by obligatory service. Having adopted the principle of the fusion of classes, no trace of the system based on serfdom should be allowed to remain." *

There is reason to believe that the old-time ignorance and passivity of the *mujik* are being modified by the very military training whose chief object was to keep him in subjection. A graver fact, whether from the military or the civil point of view, is the low level of education obtaining among the officers. This is in part an immediate result of State policy. Since the insurrection of 1863 there have been very few Polish officers, and their advancement and even their admission to the military schools have been severely restricted, a bar the more unjust since obligatory service was established. The same is true of all Jews and Catholics; and thus some of the most intelligent classes in the Empire are shut out from the military career. Protestants form only 3·7 per cent. of the whole army, but they contribute 14 per cent. of the generals, and Armenians make their way yet more successfully. Catholics are handicapped at every step. But this inequality of rights is a small evil compared with some others. Military society is a morbid growth at best; where it lacks the corrective of public criticism and control, and the example of purity in the civil government, what wonder if it exhibits in a more aggravated degree the evils of "Eine Kleine Garnison"? The harvest of vice, gambling, and drunkenness in time of peace has been reaped in the ravaged towns and the camps of

* De Bloch, ii. pp. 369–374.

Manchuria. Theft and jealousy are two old evils among the staff of the Russian army, and it is evident that the optimists who said they were nearly extinct had more faith than information. "There is so much hatred, envy, and cowardice in this wretched place," wrote Dr. Botkin, the Emperor's private physician, during the Turkish campaign, "that other sides of the human character are obliterated, and one suspects everything. I shall be glad to quit such a hell of pride, jealousy, and greed." So it is again, twenty-eight years later; and as Dr. Botkin insisted that the guilty were not only those whom he directly implicated, so we too must insist that the chief responsibility lies with those who are responsible for the whole State machine.

That the Russians are a deeply humane people, their literature, their forms of religion, and many characteristics of their social life testify. The drawing of lots and departure of recruits are subjects of Russian art which always appeal to popular sympathy. In his hatred of violence, especially in its military form, Tolstoy is a true representative of the nation. Nowhere in the world, indeed, has the refusal of military service assumed such large proportions as it has spontaneously taken among the humble peasantry of these vast prairies. The ancient innate tendency has been strengthened by an ever-growing perception that, whatever war can do for the few great men of the capital, it can bring no good to the mass of little people in the country. The Manchurian war was never popular; it needed only to find that the Jap also is a man, and no monkey, to blow away the last illusion. Every week saw an addition to the suffering of those left at home, the fruitless losses of those left in the field. At last, there came the events of "Bloody Sunday" in St. Petersburg, of which one of the first and smallest incidents, the destruction by the

soldiery of a picture of the Tsar carried in front of them by the peaceful strikers, is typical of all the rest. War abroad was seen to involve war at home; the oligarchy cared as little about its own people as about the Japs. In every part of a land which has never been allowed to organize a Peace society the cry for Peace arose, wedded with a cry for Liberty. This is, indeed, the supreme claim which, in their struggle for freedom, the Russian people make upon the sympathy of the outer world, that its inevitable victory will add to the comity of nations a State pledged by its dearest memories and by its most cherished aims to walk in the path of justice and concord.

PART II

PIONEERS OF REVOLUTION

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROPAGANDISTS, 1870–74: NICHOLAS TCHAYKOVSKY'S NARRATIVE

THE conscious and concerted movement of revolt against the oligarchy that has now been actively maintained for a quarter of a century has undergone a very striking development, the character of which may perhaps be best seen as reflected in a few leading or typical personalities. This sketchy treatment of a subject so full of dramatic interest cannot be wholly satisfactory, but it will serve to give a better account, in some ways, than is otherwise available, both of the outward course and of the psychology of the movement. Broadly, it may be said to show, so far, two phases of about equal duration, divided by a short interval of exhaustion. The first phase, to which the name "Nihilism" was commonly but inaccurately attached, extended from 1870 to about 1885, and was, in the main, a movement of the younger *intelligenzia*, though some workmen and peasants and a few soldiers took part in it. The second phase, commencing about 1890, and reaching during the last few months the dimensions of a national rising, is no less distinctly marked by the part taken by the workmen, though these have been supported by a number of the educated class larger than ever before, and by an increasing susceptibility of the peasantry.

The first of these two periods may again be divided into a time of preparation and missionary effort lasting for four or five years, and a time of open and increasingly violent struggle culminating in the adoption of terrorism as a policy, and ending in the practical extinction of the revolutionary organization by wholesale measures of governmental revenge.

I have said something of the extravagant hopes with which the emancipation of the serfs was received, the corresponding disappointment when the insufficiency of that measure became evident, and the general reaction by which this disappointment was deepened and extended. The widening demand for freedom among the educated class, which sprang up in response to the new foreign influences and intellectual and commercial opportunities after the Crimean War, was met by peremptory refusal. Law staggered for a moment on infant legs, and then collapsed. The power and ramifications of the police were steadily extended. In the hands of Count Dmitri Tolstoy and M. Pobyedonostsev, the Holy Synod became a very Inquisition, the terror of Jews and heretics of every degree and kind. The *zemstvos* were reduced to impotence; the elective justices of the peace were replaced by police officers appointed by the Government. Commerce, industry, education were harassed with absurd restrictions. Something of the corruption of officialdom came to light later on in the Turkish War. The city labourers found themselves face to face with the beginnings of an unregulated factory system and yet forbidden to engage in any protective organization. There was no nook or cranny of public or private life where the weight and degradation of arbitrary rule were not felt.

Many influences, many characters and experiences, combined to qualify this first democratic revolutionary movement on Russian soil. The young men and women

who "went to the people" in the early seventies had grown up during the decade of Liberalism that followed the Crimean War; their teachers were, in many cases, the active Radicals of that period. But there is a wide difference in spirit between the two generations—the elder individualistic and now disillusioned, the younger full of a robust faith in the common people and confident that the newer socialistic teaching of Germany and France could be applied to native circumstances. Scepticism is the constant and all but inevitable outcome of a *régime* like that of the Russo-Byzantine oligarchy. The early "Nihilist," as Turgeniev pictured him, was just the more courageous and aggressive sceptic, mainly anxious about freedom of intelligence and the rights of the individual. "A Nihilist," said Bazarov's friend (in "Fathers and Sons"), "is a man who submits to no authority, who accepts not a single principle upon faith merely, however high such a principle may stand in the eyes of men." Bazarov himself inveighs against art, romantic and philosophic abstractions, as well as against aristocrats and officials; recommends Stoicism and Büchner's "Force and Matter"; and finally falls a victim to his beloved 'ologies, dying, with the words, "I have sworn to revolt, and I do revolt!" upon his lips, from typhus caught in making a *post-mortem* examination.

It is rather to Tchernichevsky's romance, "What's to be Done?" written in prison in 1863, that one must go for an authentic account of the *état d'âme* of the student class, male and female, who called themselves "the new generation," and tried in their own persons to lay down amid these unpromising conditions the bases of "the new life." It is one of the most extraordinary ebullitions of glorified egotism of which history tells; but, at least in the emphasis upon social relations, personal

honesty and goodness, and, especially, the needs of awakened womanhood, there is something much more human in it all than in the unattractive if pathetic figure of Bazarov, the nineteenth-century Ishmael. The economic problem, the supreme need of popular education, the duty of the favourites of fortune to devote themselves to the awakening of the mind of the people —these were at first the dominant, almost the sole ideas; it was only when the innocent educational efforts of the propagandists were thwarted and punished that they began to develop a political programme. Gradually speculative Radicalism became merged in a mildly Socialistic apostolate, a necessarily secret propaganda in favour of freedom of speech and publication, public justice, personal security, the abolition of "administrative" exile, and the calling of a national assembly; a "sort of cult," as M. Leroy-Beaulieu calls it, "of which the god, deaf and unfeeling, is the people," a "sort of Church kept together by the bond of love to that misjudged deity, and whose law is hatred of its persecutors."

I have named Tchernichevsky; but there was a teacher, less known, perhaps, to the outer world, but more influential in the Russian movement, who united in himself these two generations. Colonel Peter Lavrov was born at Melekhovo, in the Pskov government, in 1823, and died in Paris in February, 1900. Like Tolstoy's, therefore, his life covered practically the whole period of the growth of modern Russia. He was a colonel of artillery and professor of mathematics at the Artillery College in St. Petersburg, and a member of the *douma* (municipal council) and *zemstvo*, at the time of Karakosov's attempt upon the life of Alexander II. in April, 1866. The attempt was followed by draconian measures taken under the direction of Muraviev,

PETER LAVROV.

PETER KROPOTKIN.

L. SHICHKO.

D. SOSKICE.

L. GOLDENBERG.

who had been called to St. Petersburg from the Governor-Generalship of Vilna and given dictatorial powers; and, among other Radicals, Lavrov was arrested, letters and poems which were considered compromising having been found in his house. For nine months he was kept in close confinement in the military prison of St. Petersburg. Forbidden any opportunity of open-air exercise, the only times in which he saw the outside of his prison were the three or four occasions on which he was conveyed to the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul to appear before the commission of inquiry which sat there; and, as he told me, he was only allowed to see his mother and his little daughter, and then only in presence of the military Governor of St. Petersburg. He was confronted with no witnesses, and no charge of conspiracy was brought against him, but he was found guilty of having published "subversive ideas" and shown sympathy with men of "criminal tendencies." For these offences he was sentenced to a long term of "administrative" exile, not, as has been erroneously stated, in Siberia, but in the government of Vologda. At three small places in this province he was detained for three years. In 1870, with the assistance of the bold and able revolutionist Lopatin, he escaped to the capital, and after a short stay in hiding there and in the country, having obtained a sham passport (made out in the name of a doctor who was afterwards implicated in revolutionary activity, and died in Siberia), he successfully crossed the frontier. Lavrov was not in any way a politician of the barricade, and he told me in after years that he did not know anything at all of Tchernichevsky's projects, and, indeed, did not believe he had any serious plans of revolutionary action. Safely beyond reach of the Russian police, Lavrov settled down in Paris, where he afterwards lived, with the exception

of the years 1874–77, when, first in Zurich, and then in London, he directed the Russian Socialist review *Forward* (*Vperied*), and some months in 1882, when he suffered expulsion from France in consequence of a paper issued under his own name and that of Vera Zassulitch, appealing to the public of Europe to send help to the Russian political suspects, then suffering in prison or in exile. All this time he was actively engaged in anthropological research. His chief works were the early "Historical Letters" (a chapter of which, on "Progress," was published in French under the title "Le Devenir Social"), which made him universally known in Russia, and a very large "History of Thought." In 1882 he allied himself with the Narodnaya Volya party, becoming one of their honoured chiefs and one of the directors of the "Messenger of the People's Will." Politically he stood as a Socialist propagandist between the Anarchist followers of Bakunin and the purely political revolutionists.

About four years before his death I visited this "grand old man" of the Russian revolutionary movement in his tiny book-lined flat on the sky-line of the Rue St. Jacques, a brisk drive south of the Seine over the cobbles of the Latin Quarter and a dozen steps across a sunny courtyard bringing me to his humble stairs. For the first time I found a Russian revolutionist who had succeeded in reaching a hale, hearty, and peaceful old age. After thirty years spent under the ban, he remained true to all his early ideals, and busy, so far as might be, in furthering them. It is curious that in England he should have remained so little known. It is true that he was but a short time in this country, and he had lost the little knowledge of our tongue which he then obtained. Since then, too, a younger generation of the movement — the

generation of Stepniak and Kropotkin, of Volkhovsky and Tchaykovsky—had claimed public attention. But Lavrov, though he had outlived many of his pupils, and was past middle life when the meteoric career of Stepniak was beginning, enjoyed universal honour among his outlawed countrymen.

The character of the propagandist crusade with which the long years of revolt opened, has been so grossly misrepresented, and it so well deserves a closer understanding, that I have thought it best that its origin and its short and tragic course should be explained by one of the few men yet surviving who took a responsible part in it; and I am fortunate in being able to record the following reminiscences of Mr. Nicholas Tchaykovsky, a leader who gave his name to the most important group of these populist missionaries, and who has been for twenty years past a director of the Russian Free Press Fund, and one of the honoured veterans among the political refugees in London.

"My memories," says M. Tchaykovsky, "go back to the time previous to the Emancipation. When I was very young, my father, who had been an official, moved to my mother's estate, which lay in the province of Viatka. As a boy, I made myself at home with the peasantry in general and the boys of the village in particular, and was known as 'Kolya,' for the days of serfdom a very uncommon, though to me very pleasant, familiarity. I slightly remember the Crimean War, the alarm about the position of Sevastopol, the excitement in local Society over the provision of hospitals, the calling-up of volunteers, the wave of patriotism in official and even in non-official circles; but I was too young fully to understand these things. As I grew older I fell entirely under the influence of my mother, who was a devoutly religious woman, and who taught

me the elements of language, arithmetic, and the Gospels, but allowed me considerable freedom otherwise. On the other hand, the peasant life, on its primitive poetic side, fascinated me so much that, when, later on, in 1862, I had to leave home for school, I felt as if I had lost a vital organ. This first school was in the town of Viatka, about four hundred miles away. Life in the house of some distant relatives did not present any interest, nor did the school, where I remained for two years, returning home each summer to spend the three or four months of the holidays. Those summer vacations are among my brightest recollections.

"After this, in 1864, I accompanied my elder brother, who was entering the University, to St. Petersburg, where I continued my studies in one of the newest and best of the Grammar-schools of the city—the 'Seventh.' I recall the decree of Liberation. For two or three years previously, mysterious rumours were constantly reaching us, and formed matter of talk among the peasants, about the freedom (*volya*) that was soon to come to them. There were signs of a rising spirit of independence, too, among the serfs and the personal servants of the manor house; and I remember one or two cases of these latter running away, under the impulse of a craving for a freer life, hiding for a fortnight in the nearest woods, and being severely flogged after their return, and threatened with being sent into obligatory military service, which they thought the greatest misfortune of all. Sometimes they would say: 'Wait awhile, my boy! Your people won't lord it over us for long! We shall be free, and you will be left to do everything yourselves.' When the actual news of the Liberation came, however, I was full of joy for my friends, for, though I could never erase from my mind the memory of hearing, while

passing through our village, the moans of men who were being flogged for failing to pay their portion of grain into the public granaries, and of my father's explanations of the necessity of such punishment, I should never again have to suffer that painful impression. I also remember the formal reading of the *pologeniye* to the elders of the village in the presence of the *starshina*, my father, and several local officials. They all looked very much overwhelmed with the gravity of the occasion, and, at the same time, rather astonished and confused; and I was often reminded of the signs of this mood afterwards when I heard of peasant disturbances on account of measures to enforce the land redemption payments. The explanation was that the peasants considered that the land ought to belong to them, and certainly they expected that it would be given to them along with personal freedom. So they were dumfounded when they found in the *pologeniye* something quite different. They never could reconcile themselves to this disappointment, and down to to-day they have stuck to their original belief that, sooner or later, the land would belong to the people.

"While at the Grammar-school in St. Petersburg I lived with my brother and mixed with his friends and fellows of the University. Among them was one very characteristic Russian figure, a highly gifted ecclesiastical scholar who, after having passed brilliantly through the Ecclesiastical Academy in the capital, was sent abroad to study philosophy. After two or three years in Germany he became a philosophic rebel, fell into something like despair, and every now and again sought oblivion in drink. His faults did not lessen his attractiveness to a younger generation whom, in his excited mood, he scolded severely for being superficial and not serious enough in their studies, and for being

ignorant of philosophy. He influenced me considerably, and it was on his advice that my brother put the expositions of Auguste Comte's philosophy by J. S. Mill and G. H. Lewes into my hands. I was only fourteen years old when I began to study that precious book; and it fascinated me to such an extent that, while sitting in school, I longed to get back to our lodgings and my chosen reading. The more I progressed, the more I was absorbed. This study powerfully affected my mind and systematized my ideas; but it certainly overstrained me, and once, after reading far into the morning, I was found lying senseless on the floor.

"I have said that my school was one of the best in St. Petersburg. The teachers of natural science and history were particularly able men and influenced us greatly, especially the former. He was a very conscientious man and treated us very kindly. We used to visit him privately in the evenings in his room in the school building, and often had delightful talks about the life that awaited us, the duties of honest and progressive men, and the meaning of various social and scientific forces. He inspired us with love for science, and warned us against superficiality in anything. He also made frequent botanical excursions with us in the outskirts of the city. To the teacher of history we were particularly indebted for training in systematic study. He taught us to make abstracts of everything we read, and to grasp the subject not only in detail but in its broad outlines and relations. We had also a very good teacher of literature, who regarded it and taught it as the consideration of the evolution of national aspirations personified and dramatized by the chief writers of a country. We studied with him Pushkin, Gogol, Nekrassov, Turgeniev, Tolstoy, and others allowed by the curriculum, but he also advised

us of other helpful writers like Pissarev, Dobrolubov, Tchernichevsky. He was no pedant, but led us to the fundamental idea of the author we were studying: for instance, in 'Dead Souls,' we quite understood the meaning of the satire on pre-reform Russian Society, which arose from Gogol's aspiration towards a better and more equitable state of affairs. We were expected in our essays not only to show a knowledge of general facts, but to show the fundamental idea and to criticise the actors of the piece and the dramatic dispositions of its various elements. The natural outcome of such exercises was the development of aspirations to live to help in shaping the destiny of our age against all existing routine, and of a sense of reality as contrasted with the false romanticism of the older schools.

"The first germs of the conscious revolutionary spirit I also received in this school. It began with our studies of the French Revolution. I remember very clearly how, after having read Mignet's history, I was able to tell the story of the Revolution so picturesquely that for half an hour my class and teacher were spell-bound, and how, after the lesson was over, several of my schoolfellows came and grasped my hand and congratulated me. That was my first act of propaganda; and one of those fellows was a public man who has taken a prominent part in the recent events.

"In 1868 I entered the University of St. Petersburg in the faculty of natural science and mathematics, after having taken the gold medal at the Grammar-school. I fell at once into the circle of my school-fellows, and we began to read and discuss Herbert Spencer's Essays, sitting, on two or three nights a week, far into the small hours. This was the initiation into the next period of my life. A few months after entering, I was elected by my class to visit our

impecunious fellows in order to distribute certain donations entrusted to us by philanthropic societies. This was my first public duty. I discovered some of them in most miserable circumstances, unable to attend lectures for want of money, though formally registered as students. Still, we were not allowed to have our permanent fund for helping such cases. At Christmas of that year, student disturbances took place in the University and other higher educational institutions. It was considered obligatory for all who acted for the common interest to attend the students' meetings; and I hardly missed one, though there were sometimes two or three a day in different parts of the town. The origin of the movement was the craving of students for active public life amongst themselves, taking shape in a demand for permission for a students' fund to maintain a library and restaurant, which would naturally imply the right of meeting, then recently withdrawn. As a rule, in those gatherings there were, among the speakers, two or three like S. G. Netchayev, who saw the insufficiency of these demands and the futility of any attempt to secure students' rights and liberties without altering the general political condition of the country. So early as 1869, therefore, we began to understand the actual place of University life in the common life of the country. The authorities paid little attention to this agitation; but, after Christmas, the University decided to make all of those who took part in the meetings sign an undertaking that in future they would obey the regulations of the University. Netchayev and his followers said, 'Leave the University!' But I signed the rules, not without scruples, together with the rest; and we found our justification in a firm resolution to use our University life to prepare ourselves for a serious effort to bring about substantial social and political

reforms. From that moment to my last days in St. Petersburg my time was always divided into a series of efforts—first the social and political reading that seemed indispensable as preparation for a useful public career, and, secondly, various attempts to organize ourselves, with others of the same mind, in a united and effective body. One of the first steps in this direction was taken in my first year at the University, when we undertook to organize a school for teaching artisans' children too poor to attend the ordinary schools. It was in this effort in 1869 that I first met Sophia Perovsky, who was then hardly sixteen years old, and Madame Korba (*née* Meinhardt; she was then about twenty years old, but already married; she is, I believe, still alive in Eastern Siberia). While maintaining this school, we gave more and more thought to our combined studies of social subjects, reading papers on such subjects as public education, the working of the *zemstvos*, the history of revolutionary movements, and so on. Then there was another more serious development. After the students' movement, in which Netchayev's agitation was mixed, he tried to draw us into his conspiracy. We were not satisfied with his methods and ideas, however; they seemed to us coercive and Jesuitical. In our further efforts we always kept Netchayev's example before us as the opposite of what we ought to do. Above all, we thought we must base our organization on a full understanding and on absolute freedom to take part with full knowledge of the possible consequences.

"In the spring of 1869, there was formed in St. Petersburg a more serious circle, consisting of only five persons—Serdukov, then well known as the first to commence educational propaganda among the working men, Mark Natonson, a man of powerful character, Alexandrayev—these three were medical students and

librarians of the students' library—myself, and another, a technological student, who afterwards left the movement. Thus three principal higher-educational institutions were represented. This was the nucleus of the so-called Tchaykovsky circle, which was very soon connected with a female circle consisting of the Kornilovs, Perovsky, Obodovsky, and other female higher-course students. Our aim was to bring about a union of the advanced elements among the students first of St. Petersburg, and afterwards all over Russia, and then to proceed to make connections among the workers and the peasants and gradually prepare a revolutionary upheaval. Yes! we were conscious of this aim from the beginning; we called our work the preparation of revolutionary *cadres*, the creation of an intelligent democracy (*narodnya intelligenzia*). Another and separate circle, that called after Dolgushin, though it came out with a proclamation before anything directly revolutionary had been done by us, had a very short existence. Dolgushin was one of Netchayev's pupils, was imprisoned at the same time, and after his release formed a circle which, after having issued certain proclamations, was extinguished, its chief members dying in the central prisons or in Siberia. One of Dolgushin's chief colleagues was an old Grammar-school mate of mine.

"Our method was to create a series of small circles in various parts of the country for common studies and for supplying books and other information from the centres like St. Petersburg or Moscow. We took particular care to maintain and cultivate the connections of our members with their old homes and countrymen, as this local patriotism often afforded the most useful introductions. You understand that in Russia co-operative house-keeping was and is common,

especially among students and workmen, and these 'local communes' (*zemlyachestvos*) were our best recruiting-grounds. Through them our circles could be conveniently connected with provincial groups of a preparatory nature to whom we undertook to supply the best books at that time in circulation, original and translated, at half-price and on credit. Two of our number were librarians of the students' Medical Academy and had special facilities in this direction. We found this a strong practical method of keeping a large number of groups of the most intelligent and energetic men throughout the country in touch and co-operation. In fact, this was the first large organization of the kind that ever existed in Russia. It certainly prepared the ground for a new current of public opinion. The carrying-on of this systematic work on a pre-arranged plan led to the organization of secret students' congresses and to tours of visitation in the provinces. Summer settlements also served our purpose very well. Russian students commonly spend their summer vacations either by accepting private engagements as tutors to younger candidates for schools and universities or, if they have well-to-do relations in the country, they disperse, and enjoy themselves in sport and amusements. We objected to this custom, arguing that we, children of a trodden-down nation, brought up at the expense of the labour of the peasants and workmen, had no right to waste our time in this easy fashion, that it was our solemn duty to use all our spare hours in preparing for the work of emancipation. So, for instance, we cautiously gathered together a score of picked young men and women, found a large *datcha* (summer villa), in the outskirts of the town, and settled there in company fashion—men in one half of the house and women in the other. We agreed upon a common plan

of reading together selected books on political economy, history, and psychology, studying separately in our rooms in the forenoons, and discussing the studied subjects in our common hall after our modest *table-d'hôte* in the afternoon. We were full of enthusiasm in working out our common ideas and shaping our plans for future action. In not a few cases the ties of comradeship thus formed lasted till death, and mutual confidence became the foundation-stone of confraternity. Thus there was something more than an organization of political conspirators; there were bonds of true brotherhood, which, in the terrible years that followed, had to bear all sorts of trial. Larger organizations were formed in the later periods of our political growth, but they were never proof against difference and division as was that original nucleus of idealist pioneers, who decided from the very first days of their public life to devote themselves completely to the cause of freeing their country from political and economic slavery.

"Meanwhile, our central circle had grown to twenty or more men and women. Among those of them who played an important part in the subsequent movement I may name especially Sergius Kravchinsky (Stepniak), Sophia Perovsky, Dmitri Klements, Felix Volkhovsky, Leonidas Shichko, Hermann Lopatin, N. Cherushin, S. Klatchko, S. Sinyegub, three sisters V., A., and L. Kornilov, Miss Obodovsky, Peter Kropotkin, M. Kuprianov, F. Lermontov, and L. Tikhomirov. At the end of 1872 we had quite a small army of picked men and women among the intelligent youth, organized in influential groups, not only in St. Petersburg, but in Moscow, Kiëv, Odessa, and Kharkov, with smaller groups in Tula, Orel, Viatka, Perm, Saratov, Samara, Rostov, Vilna, Minsk, and other towns. Among the books we distributed were those of Lassalle—that was

A MUJIK, Yasnaya Polyana.

AN EVENING PARTY.

From the painting of V. G. Makovsky in the Tretiakov Gallery.

the beginning of German Socialist teaching in Russia, Marx came later—Tchernichevsky, Dobrolubov, Lavrov, and Flerovsky, Louis Blanc on 'The Right of Labour' and 'The Revolution of '48,' Robert Owen, Darwin, Herbert Spencer—the 'Essays,' 'First Principles,' and the 'Biology'—and histories of the Labour Movement in England and other countries. We also compiled and issued books for workmen, some of which, like 'The Clever Mechanic,' have been reprinted over and over again; others being a free translation of the tale of 'A French Peasant,' by Erkmann and Chatrian, a 'History of Pugachev's Rising,' and various 'Revolutionary Songs.'

"My first arrest, which took place in the spring of 1871, was connected with our publishing efforts. One of us had been sent abroad to establish a permanent printing-office in Switzerland, in order to supply us with suitable clandestine literature, as we foresaw that the censorship would soon take strict measures to suppress most of the best books which we could circulate openly. A letter from this comrade addressed to me was intercepted; and I was arrested in one of the summer camps I have described. The police and gendarmes were quite surprised, on coming to arrest one suspect, to find him in the company of a score of others, and, naturally, paid special attention to all of these, taking down their names and other particulars. I was imprisoned 'at the Chain Bridge,' as the political police department (then still the notorious 'Third Section') was called at that time, and there I lay for three months. This prison was used for the preliminary detention of political and religious suspects under investigation. Here I first learned the torture of doing nothing for twenty-four hours per day, and of being watched day and night by a piercing eye through the

'Judas,' the nervous excitement produced by solitary incarceration, and the delight of first receiving a secret note from comrades outside through a bribed jailer.

"On being liberated, I went straight to my friends and continued to work as before. My second arrest, about a year later, was caused by suspicion of the secret police that I was organizing a secret congress of advanced students from all the university towns. I used, at that time, to make a regular search in my room every night before going to bed and to hide any compromising papers, notes, or addresses I had about me. So, when the police visited me on the ominous night, they found nothing except a paper on students' congresses written by some of my friends and left in my room in my absence, without my knowledge. They tried by all means to find proofs of my authorship of this paper, but failed; and they reluctantly released me for want of evidence, but with the firm intention of presently finding me guilty of 'criminal activity.' When we next learned that my arrest was contemplated, it was decided that I must disappear 'underground'—to live with a false passport or none at all. I again turned to the provinces.

"The revolutionary *cadres* were now ready and eager for a field in which to apply their energies. They even began to despise the old student discussions. Spontaneous efforts had already been made in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and elsewhere to establish communications with the workmen and peasants, with the object, in the first place, of teaching the elements of grammar and science. Some of our comrades, like Serdukov, Cherushin, Sinyegoub, and Stepniak, went among the *artels* * of bricklayers, navvies, and carpenters,

* Productive co-operative Societies, having usually their living-quarters in common.

and into the spinning and weaving mills; and, at the same time, we held evening classes in our own rooms, to which scores of workmen came daily, at first to learn the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and afterwards to discuss books and problems that interested them. Thus we found a number of intelligent young peasants and artisans, who, in turn, formed special circles to carry on the work among factory hands and their rural compatriots. When this stage had been reached, the cry, 'Go to the people!' arose to give a new extension to our campaign. The outcome is shown in the famous report of the Minister of Justice, Count Pahlen, in 1874, according to which traces of Socialistic propaganda had been discovered in thirty-six provinces of the Empire.

"After these connections with the workmen had been established, I felt that my own further efforts in the organization of the intellectual youth were finished for a time; and I undertook to write a number of books and other publications for circulation among the peasantry. For this purpose, and because there were threats of my being arrested in St. Petersburg, I went into the provinces. But once started on this undertaking, my mind was freed from the pressure of the actual and practical conditions in which reformative work had to be done in Russia at that time, and the ineffectiveness of ordinary political and socialistic propaganda among a deeply religious peasantry, still hopeful of benefits from above, was one of the stumbling-blocks which forced us to think over the whole situation. While living in the province of Kiëv and in Voronezh, I met some friends with whom I began to work upon the rather Utopian idea of formulating a new religion, and we were soon compelled to transfer ourselves with this stupendous mission, for the sake of more effective

experiment, to the steppes of Kansas. After two years of struggling agricultural life on the American prairies, and an interval of arduous employment in a shipyard and a sugar factory in Philadelphia, I returned to Europe, landing in Liverpool in May, 1878. Soon afterwards I settled in Paris, and became a correspondent of one of the Moscow Liberal papers. There was no lack of comrades then in Paris, mostly 'invalids' of the terrorist campaign of the Narodnaya Volya. I tried to resume my former work in the movement, but found it much more difficult than I had thought. Political struggle in Russia was reduced for the time to an acute duel between the 'Executive Committee' and the despotism, and I saw no earthly use in my returning to Russia, being little fit for the special effort it required. I was sent to London for the sake of more quiet and regular life in June of 1880, and have stayed here since, save for occasional visits to the Continent."

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XV

THE TSAR'S VENGEANCE: MME. KOVALSKY'S NARRATIVE

Mr. Tchaykovsky's narrative sufficiently indicates the innocence and generosity of this outburst of democratic revivalism, in which, in course of the year 1874, over two thousand missionaries, mainly of the educated class, were engaged. Had I space I should supplement it by other narratives that would make equally clear the strength of character, resourcefulness, energy, and capacity for suffering and sacrifice, shown by many of them in their crusade among the peasantry and workmen, and in the desperate struggle in which they were involved directly the Government discovered that it was seriously challenged. No modern movement that I know of can show such a record of personal heroism. All of these men and women were abandoning their home life, their worldly position and prospects, and risking their individual safety. Some of them were wealthy and of the noble class; they, too, gave everything to the cause. Voinaralsky, a justice of the peace, about forty years of age, spent all his means, some £4000, on the propaganda; he and Kovalik—president of the board of justices of the Tchernigov province, a landlord and a man of great capacity, who acted similarly—were arrested and, after imprisonment in the St. Petersburg fortress, the Kharkov central prison, of ill-fame, and the Kara prison, were exiled to Sredne

Kolymsk in the extreme north-east of Siberia. Prince Peter Kropotkin, already known as a geologist and explorer, risked everything to give lessons to the workmen of St. Petersburg. He was at length caught in the guise of a house painter, and incarcerated in the fortress. The circumstances of his escape are well-known; and now that we can read his own "Memoirs," I need say no more of this delightful personality than that Russia's loss has been England's abundant gain. Dmitri Lisogoub, a large landowner of Tchernigov, whom Stepniak in "Underground Russia" dubbed "the saint of the party," gave up the whole of his fortune, some £40,000, to the movement. Though he had taken no part in terrorist action, he was hung at Odessa in August, 1879. Sophia Perovsky, one of the first members of the "Tchaykovtsy," and afterwards one of the Tsaricides, was the daughter of the Governor-General of St. Petersburg and niece of the Minister of Public Instruction. This list could be easily and considerably extended; but I would rather emphasize the intellectual and moral strength of the movement. The feebler enthusiasts were soon shed; and, as time and the first burst of hopefulness passed, the remainder grew more practical, definite, and militant. Realizing the ignorance and inertia of the masses of the people, they did not become any the less men of the people—the restoration of the land was, indeed, one of the cardinal points of their programme—but they were forced to recognize that greater liberty was a condition of success in their agitation; and their diversion to a direct struggle against the Government was confirmed by the cruel measures taken to suppress their educational campaign.

Official reports give the number of persons arrested on political charges or suspicion from March, 1873, to

December, 1876, as 1611; while the number actually tried in 1877–79 was 2348, without counting "administrative" cases.* In the earlier years named, the only offences alleged consisted in taking part in the mild radical propaganda I have described. The classic instance is the "trial of the 193," in October, 1877. Over a thousand arrests had been made; after imprisonment for from one to four years, eight hundred of the victims had been liberated, it being impossible to bring any definite charge against them. Before the trial, eighty of the prisoners had died, committed suicide, or become insane in gaol, and five more died during the first few days of the process. These bare figures, which are typical of many that could be cited, must serve to indicate the horrible prison conditions to which the revolutionary propagandists were subjected. Of the 193 men and women actually brought to trial, only forty were found guilty and sentenced (one to death, the others to imprisonment and exile); so that 960 admittedly innocent lives had been seriously injured or altogether destroyed in course of this one raid in the metropolis. "Admittedly innocent:" yet half of those acquitted were immediately re-arrested and exiled "administratively." "Almost every one of the persons punished and found not guilty," says Mr. Kennan, "ultimately become a revolutionist; and before 1885 more than one-third of them were in Siberia and two of them—Zheliabov and S. Perovsky—had perished on the scaffold with the blood of Alexander II. on their hands."

In the hope of enabling the reader more easily to realize these events I resort again to the biographic method, taking three figures characteristic of the middle

* Malchinsky, "Review of the Revolutionary Socialist Movement in Russia," quoted by Tikhomirov, "La Russie Politique et Sociale."

period of the "Nihilist" movement before it had entered upon the "terrorist" stage, all three now happily enjoying the free air of the West after long years of imprisonment and exile.

Madame Katherine Breshkovsky's story of her childhood is a variant of that recited in the last chapter. The daughter of a nobleman, she grew up amid evidences of the misery of the peasants, on the one hand, and influences of Western thought, not then under the censor's ban, on the other. Full of the fresh enthusiasm of the Emancipation days, she opened a village school, witnessed the disappointment of the people who thought they were to get land as well as liberty, saw them flogged into a less exacting frame of mind. So she became a reformer. In St. Petersburg, with her mother, she met Radicals in Society and out of it, and, returning to the country, resumed her teaching work among the peasants. Here she married a liberal landowner. Husband and wife presently fell under police surveillance for their activity in zemstvo work, while Mme. Breshkovsky's father was deposed from office without trial, and some of their friends were exiled to Siberia. The news of the Netchayev trial in 1871 reached these people like an alarm bell. "I was at this time twenty-six years old. My husband, like me, had a whole life before him, and therefore I felt that I must speak frankly. I asked him if he were willing to suffer exile or death in this cause of freedom. He said that he was not. Then I left him."

Mme. Breshkovsky joined a revolutionary circle in Kiëv, one of the most active centres of the movement, and at once entered upon propagandist work, passing from village to village in peasant dress, gathering little groups in the log-cabins, and speaking to them in parable and homely argument. At length she was

tracked down and conveyed to St. Petersburg, where she lay in prison for two years, to be brought to trial with "the 193." For a protest against the unfairness of the trial, her sentence was increased to five years in Siberia with hard labour, with exilé for life. In those days there was no Siberian railway, and the journey by the great post-road, jolting *telega* by day and filthy *étape* by night, was an experience calculated to break any but the most resolute spirit. This spirit was not broken. After ten months in the prison of Kara, Mme. Breshkovsky was transferred to the village of Barguzin in Trans-Baikalia. In the summer of 1881, in company with three other "politicals," she made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the Pacific coast, and after various adventures, was captured, brought back to Kara, and sentenced to four years' hard labour and forty strokes of the lash. The latter punishment was not carried out. Here she suffered with the other women politicals in the repeated "hunger strikes," but before the culminating incident of the flogging of Mme. Sigida, Mme. Breshkovsky was removed to the wretched Buriât hamlet of Selenginsk, near the Chinese frontier to the south of Lake Baikal, where Mr. Kennan saw her in October, 1885. She was then, he writes,* "a lady perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a strong intellectual face, a frank, unreserved manner, and sympathies that seemed to be impulsive and generous. Her face bore traces of much suffering, and her thick dark wavy hair, which had been cut short in prison at the mines, was streaked here and there with grey; but neither hardship, nor exile, nor penal servitude had been able to break her brave, finely tempered spirit or to shake her convictions of honour and duty. She was, as I soon discovered, a woman of much cultivation, spoke French,

* "Siberia and the Exile System," ii 121, 122.

German, and English, and was a fine musician. She was now under direct supervision and control of the local chief of police; there was not another educated woman, so far as I know, within a hundred miles in any direction; she received from the Government an allowance of a dollar and a half a week for her support; her correspondence was under police control; she was separated for life from her family and friends; and she had, it seemed to me, absolutely nothing to look forward to except a few years more or less of privation, and at last burial in a lonely graveyard beside the Selenga River. Almost the last words she said to me were, 'Mr. Kennan, we may die in exile, and our children may die in exile, and our children's children may die in exile, but something must come of it at last!' I have never seen nor heard of Mme. Breshkovsky since that day. She has passed as completely out of my life as if she had died when I bade her good-bye; but I cannot recall her last words to me without feeling conscious that all my standards of courage and heroic self-sacrifice have been raised for all time and raised by the hand of a woman."

The whirligig of time brings strange changes; and so it happens that while Mr. Kennan is forbidden again to penetrate into the prison-house of the Tsars, Mme. Breshkovsky, as I write, twenty years after he left her in the heart of Asia, is carrying on, in the United States, a crusade by voice and pen on behalf of the cause to which she has given her life. After seven years of the isolation just described, and more years in Tobolsk and other Siberian towns, she was permitted to return to European Russia in September, 1896, and at once rejoined the revolutionary movement as an active organizer for the Revolutionary Socialist Party, moving about from town to town and village to village, and more than once narrowly escaping recapture. If the progress of

the next few years equal that of the last, she may yet see the substantial victory of the movement which seemed to have been extinguished when the American traveller found her in her place of punishment.

I pass to another and a no less striking figure of the struggle. I am indebted to Mme. Elizabeth Kovalsky-Mankovsky for an autobiographical sketch which in many points supplements the references to her sufferings at Kara in the books of Kennan and Stepniak; and I now summarize this statement, which it may be hoped will be followed some day by a fuller account of this remarkable life.

As was the case with most of the women leaders of the revolutionary movement, Mme. Kovalsky's first offence against the rulers of her country lay in the domain of popular elementary education. Having herself graduated at an early age, she organized, in 1868, a series of classes in science, history, and political economy, for women, about fifty of whom used to meet in her house in Kharkov, and also an elementary evening school for working women and a small library. Police raids soon made it impossible to continue this work; and, when Mme. Kovalsky and two other women sent as a deputation to request the admission of women to the Kharkov University received a rude rebuff from Count Dmitri Tolstoy, they felt that their patriotic efforts were finally thwarted. Mme. Kovalsky went abroad, and, at the University of Zurich, came into contact with some of the leaders of the early Radical propaganda. She now joined the ranks of the revolt, and, on her return, started work, under guise of an elementary school teacher, among the factory population of Kolpino. She was soon warned to resign her post, but was engaged similarly for several years in different parts of the country.

During this time many of her fellows were arrested and cruelly punished; and the revolutionary character of the movement became more and more pronounced. The first reading and discussion circles had expanded into a network of secret reform clubs having a few peasant and workmen members; from these clubs had next risen the great crusade "to the people" of 1872–73; after the first avalanche of the Government's vengeance, the remnants of this crusade had developed a more fixed and resolute effort to arouse the peasantry to revolt, and to supply intellectual ammunition through secret printing-presses. The agrarian agitation continued through the years 1876–78, and was not by any means destitute of success; but every day the demand for some means of self-defence rose more urgently as the arrests increased from scores to hundreds, and from hundreds to thousands, and as stories of horrible torture began to be received from the central prisons and from the main highway of eastward exile. A considerable number of determined revolutionists now existed in various parts of the country, bound together by ties of common sentiment and peril, converts to the appeal to force, at first reluctant, but now unflinching, rash but resourceful, unmerciful to themselves, and in the end exhibiting a very frenzy of desperate energy.

Mme. Kovalsky was one of these. In 1880, along with a comrade named Ugedrin, she journeyed into Ukraïna, organized the "Southern Workmen's Association," and was arrested in Kiëv, along with I. Shchedrin (already referred to), others of the circle being captured a little later. In the following year, the prisoners—Elizabeth Kovalsky, I. Shchedrin, Preobrasensky, Paul Ivanov, Sophia Bogomoletz (the daughter of a rich landowner in Poltava, and wife of a physician, who was

also afterwards exiled), Ivan Kashintsev, Kinsnetsov (who was to distinguish himself in the later years of his exile in Siberia as an archæologist!), and three others—were put through the form of trial by court-martial. The first three were sentenced to death (though Mme. Kovalsky was not accused of any terrorist act, the charge being simply that she had belonged to and helped to form revolutionary circles), Ivanov to twenty years', and Mme. Bogomoletz to ten years' penal servitude, and the rest to deportation. On the petition of the Governor-General, the capital sentence was modified to penal servitude for life.

This was the hey-day of Siberian exile. There was no sign yet of the officers of the Tsar being wearied of a penal system founded in three centuries of select barbarity—quite the reverse. Every year eighteen thousand fresh exiles were being dumped into prisons scarcely capable of holding decently one-half of their allotted number, in whose foul *kameras* typhus, scurvy, typhoid, syphilis, and other malignant diseases found a natural home, and all manner of vileness prevailed. Every year seven thousand men and women, many of them "politicals" of gentle birth and noble character, were being consigned by "administrative process"—without any trial whatever—to forced colonization, to the Tsar's mines at Kara or Nerchinsk, to far Sakhalin, or to some desolate Yakut hamlet within the frozen zone. The misery and degradation of the journey by *étape*, the two-thousand mile march to the tune of jingling chains, the shouts of the Cossack guards, and "begging song" of the common convicts, the whirling snow, bringing the mercury far below zero, the occasional break for liberty, and the "dog's death for the dog," all the diabolical refinements and variety of torture, from the petty tyranny of police surveillance to the

swifter argument of the *plet* and the dark doom of secret punishment cells—such was the daily process by which terrorists were being manufactured out of the flower of Russian manhood and womanhood; and as yet no other voice of protest was heard, nor did their voice yet reach the outer world. It was in this chaos of hopeless stupidity, incompetence, caprice, corruption, and all-embracing barbarity, that Madame Kovalsky was to spend the next twenty years of her life.

At Krasnoyarsk the Kiëv politicals had a foretaste of what was to come from a gaoler, who insulted Mme. Bogomoletz, struck some of the prisoners, and made himself otherwise unpleasant. A successful protest was made in the form of a "hunger strike"—refusal of food—which lasted for six days. In the next stage of the journey the women suffered severely from frost and physical weakness. After a month in the prison of Irkutsk, in January, 1882, Mmes. Kovalsky and Bogomoletz managed to escape and to hide for a fortnight. They were then recaptured, and locked up in a cold, dark, and unventilated punishment cell. Here they were visited by Col. Soloviev, an adjutant of the governor, who ordered Mme. Bogomoletz to be straight-jacketed and Mme. Kovalsky to be fettered. Hearing of this, the prisoner Shchedrin struck Col. Soloviev, who had him tied to a pillar with ropes, struck him with the flat of his sword, and, when he had recovered his senses, had him put in the "fox," an arrangement of hand and leg fetters joined by an iron bar so short that the limbs cannot be straightened, and the breathing and the circulation of the blood are so impeded that I am told the strongest prisoners cannot stand more than two days of this punishment. Shchedrin was then tried for this new offence, again sentenced to death, but again reprieved, on the petition of Governor Pedashenko,

the supposedly more merciful penalty being that he should be chained to a wheelbarrow for the full term of penal servitude. Six months later, as I have already narrated, he was sent back—still lashed to his wheelbarrow—to Schlusselburg, where he became insane, and in the fifth year was transferred to an asylum, where he died. I am informed that money sent to the asylum for his benefit was returned to the donor.

Meanwhile, Mme. Kovalsky was conveyed from Irkutsk to Kara, then the chief Siberian centre for political offenders. Soon afterwards (April, 1882) Myshkin and seven others escaped from the men's prison, only to be recaptured and brought back. Partly because the prison had just been visited by Mr. Galkin Vraskoy, the head of the Russian prison administration, who was still in the neighbourhood, the staff proceeded to vindicate themselves by wholesale measures of repression. Many of the male prisoners were beaten and placed among the common criminals. In the women's prison, too, though it was at some distance, a sterner *régime* was introduced, every little liberty and comfort being withdrawn. "We were deprived," Mme. Kovalsky writes, "of our own underwear and some clothes we had, and given instead prison garments, consisting of a rough linen shirt, which did not reach the knees, and a skirt of the same material, which was very short and small. The doors of our cells all opened upon the *camera* (large room), where a guard of Cossacks was placed, and each had an uncovered window, through which the soldiers continually examined us, audibly criticising our dress and appearance. A dirty wooden bucket stood in each cell, poisoning the air which would have been bad enough without that. We asked that the Cossacks should be removed, and prison cloaks given us to cover our naked limbs, but we received only

an insulting denial. We therefore declared a 'hunger strike,' and Bogomoletz, in despair, tried to set fire to the prison. After a few days of starvation we were given some of our clothes, and were transferred to another prison a few miles away. One woman, Mme. Rogachev, committed suicide, and another, Mme. Löschern,* attempted to do so."

At this time Mme. Maria Kutitonsky,† having served her time in prison, was freed, to be sent to her place of exile. On leaving, she told her friends she should avenge them by an attack on General Ilyashevich, the Governor-General of the Trans-Baikal, who had been directly responsible in particular for the beating of the male prisoners. Knowing that this would cost her own life, but hoping that the attention of the outer world would be called to his cruelties, she procured a revolver and an interview, and shot the official, who, however, recovered. She was thrown into a tiny cell in the prison at Tchita, where for three months she lay, without bed-clothing, on the bare floor. But for surreptitious aid from common criminals in the prison she would

* "Sophia Löschern von Herzfeld was the daughter of a general, and her relations belonged to the Court circles in Petersburg. She joined the propagandist movement in the early sixties, and lived among the peasants; was arrested, endured four years' imprisonment while still under examination, and was at last banished to Siberia in the 'case of the 193.' The efforts of a relative, a lady in the Tsaritsa's household, procured her pardon, and in 1878 she was released from prison; but a year later she was arrested in Kiëv, and resisted capture 'with weapons in hand.' She and Ossinsky were condemned, but in her case, 'by favour,' the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, and she was deported to Kara in 1879. She was modest and even shy in manner, giving the impression of an extremely reserved character."—Deutsch, pp. 266, 267.

† As a student in Odessa she joined the movement when quite young. In 1879 she was arrested as a comrade of Lisogoub, condemned to four years' penal servitude, and sent to Kara. Leo Deutsch speaks of her as "beautiful and distinguished-looking, with fair hair and gentle winning manners," and Kennan describes her as "a woman of extraordinary energy, courage, self-control and firmness of purpose."

have died. She was then sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. She afterwards developed lung disease and died in 1887.

For several years the struggle of these unhappy but indomitable women to secure tolerable treatment continued. One of the most remarkable of them and indeed of the whole movement, Mme. Maria Kovalevsky, became seriously ill in 1881, and her reason beginning to give way, she was allowed for a time to join her husband in Minusinsk. During this interval it was determined to remove Mmes. Bogomoletz, Rossikova, and Kovalsky, as troublesome and insubordinate persons, to Irkutsk. By one of the sheer blunders not infrequent in the Russian prison system, instead of the last named, Mme. Kovalevsky was sent. The error was discovered ten days later, but though Mme. Kovalsky was then removed, the scapegoat was not brought back. In the autumn of 1887 Mme. Kovalsky again broke out of the Irkutsk prison, but was caught within two months and confined in a small dark and foul "punishment cell." She was also sentenced to twenty strokes of the *plet*, but this was not carried out. Shortly afterwards the four women just named again refused to take food until more humane conditions were promised them, and Mme. Kovalsky attempted to hang herself, but without success. This protest proved effective, and all four were presently taken back to Kara.

Within a year a new and, in the result, a much graver crisis arose. On August 5, 1888, Baron Korv, Governor-General of the Amur, visited the Kara prisons. Elizabeth Kovalsky decided not to obey the prison rule of standing up during the inspection, and, when threatened with force, declared that she refused to stand up before the representatives of so iniquitous

a Government. The sequel is here related in her own words:—

"The ordinary life of the prison continued. Two days passed. Every moment I expected to hear that I was to be punished, but my comrades assured me that the incident was ended. For hours Maria Kovalevsky and I walked along our prison corridor talking over the possible results of my behaviour. Although all the political women prisoners at that time in the prison (Maria Kovalevsky, Nadeshda Smirnitzky, and Maria Kaluzhny) perfectly agreed with me as to our tactics towards Government representatives, and I was positively sure that none of them would ever blame me, nevertheless the fear for their fate deprived me of any rest. Going away for the night to my cell, I heartily kissed my nearest and best friend, Kovalevsky, feeling that this might be our last kiss, that the next day might part us for ever. Being ill and excited, I slept little, and at last a sudden noise in the corridor woke me. Opening my eyes, I was terrified to see in the darkness some figures of men coming on tiptoes to my bed. Was it reality, or a fearful dream? In answer to my cries, I heard the words, 'Cover her mouth!' It was no dream, indeed. I felt several rough hands on my shoulders, and a piece of rag in my mouth, that prevented me from crying out.

"Some of the men, dressed in a military uniform, quickly seized me, undressed as I was, covered my body with a blanket, and carried me through the prison corridor into the yard. I was choking with rage. The prison gates were open; near them stood a waggon, surrounded by prison officers. I recognized the commandant of the political prisons, Masukov, among them. 'Throw her in the waggon!' commanded the same voice that had ordered my mouth to be closed.

VERA ZASSULITCH.

SOPHIE PEROVSKY.

ELIZABETH KOVALSKY.

MARIA KOVALEVSKY.

P. IVANOVA.

HOPE SIGIDA.

"The Cossacks threw me on to the bottom of the rough wooden waggon, and themselves sat at both sides, holding me fast by hands and legs, and the waggon started. The gloomy starless sky seemed to me to be the heavy cover of a coffin, and the earth a white shroud over which swept the cold autumn wind. Further off, in the direction where our waggon was going, could be seen the river Shilka. The slow-moving waggon was surrounded by a body of gendarmes, headed by the commandant Masukov. The nearest one to the waggon was the strange officer whose cruel voice I had before heard. He now joked about my condition, and for long afterward his cynical laughter bitterly rang in my ears.

"Wild thoughts, one worse than the other, flashed through my head; at times I fainted from the lack of air. What were they going to do with me? The waggon moved slowly on. We were now near the water; the black heavy waves seemed to ask a victim. Dear faces and scenes came before my eyes—my mother, who remained alone far away in Russia; my dear friend buried in the fortress of Schlüsselburg; a scene from my childhood.

"To die without revenge—this is worse than death, this is impossible, I thought.

"The waggon suddenly turned to the right. A little house stood near the river-side. Here the waggon stopped. The Cossacks carried me in, and put me on the cold dirty floor, still holding fast my hands and legs.

"'Take off her shirt and put on a prison one!' shouted the *smotritel* (gendarme officer). In a moment I was on my feet, but I had scarcely struck the man when the whole gang of warders caught my arms and held me so fast that I fainted.

"When I opened my eyes it was early morning. I

lay in the bottom of a boat, and around me sat eight soldiers, holding in their hands a prison overcoat to prevent me from jumping into the water. I could not move. My head was splitting, and I felt pains all over my body. 'She has wakened! Look!' I heard one soldier tell his comrades.*

"Thus they brought me to Verkhni Udinsk prison."

In this new central convict establishment, situated about six hundred miles from Kara, Madame Kovalsky spent the following year. Once she tried to escape, but failed, and she was then transferred to Gorni Zerentui, one of the prisons of the desolate district of the Nerchinsk mines. Her further experiences I cannot now trace further than to say that the "life" term of twenty years being concluded, she was allowed to join her husband, Mekhislav Mankovsky, a political who had been arrested in Warsaw, and served a long term of penal servitude, and that she is now living in Switzerland, broken in health indeed, but no less confident than of old in the justice and the ultimate success of the cause to which she had given every power of her life.

But the story does not end here. The circumstances of her removal from Kara soon became known to the friends she left behind, and provoked a tragic protest, the news of which presently echoed round the world, and led in the end to the abolition of the corporal punishment of women, and the closing of the Kara political prison, whose history had been so full of scandal. In the first place, the four women "politicals"

* Mr. Kennan says, in his brief account of this affair, of which he received four separate accounts from political exiles, and one from a Russian gentleman living near the Kara mines who was not an exile: "The distance from Ust Kara to Stretinsk is about seventy miles up-stream, and Madame Kovalsky must have spent at least three days in the small row-boat with the soldiers who had already stripped her naked and insulted her."

—Kovalevsky, Smirnitsky, Sigida,* and Kaluzhny—refused to take food till an assurance was given that the officer responsible for the outrage would be removed. These women were *Buntari*, irreconcilables: arrested in the attempt to stir the peasantry to insurrection, they had deliberately concluded, in view of the brutality with which the Government had suppressed the first innocent propaganda, that the best use they could make of what life remained to them was to protest as often and as effectively as possible against any illegality or inhumanity to which they and their fellow-prisoners were subjected, in the hope that at last the outer world would hear their cry and some little reform be secured for fear of a widespread scandal. Mr. Deutsch has recorded † that the male political prisoners were at this time much disheartened by several minor cases of apostasy in the ranks of the revolutionists produced by a set policy of the authorities to encourage repentance. These women were not of that kind of stuff. Some of the male prisoners were brought to try to persuade them to give in, but for eight days they maintained their "hunger strike." Shortly afterwards Masukov's superior promised his removal, but this was not carried out. Both women and men politicals now declared a second "hunger strike," which was only terminated by

* Hope Sigida was the daughter of a well-known merchant in Taganrog, and after graduating in the local *gymnase* with honours and gold medal, married an officer of the Taganrog Circuit Court. Both joined the revolutionary movement, and were arrested in connection with the seizure of a secret printing-office in January, 1886. The husband was condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, and he died on the way to Sakhalin. Madame Sigida is described as "a woman of great independence and self-reliance, intelligent and cultivated in the highest degree, and a fanatical idealist. In personal appearance she was very attractive, being a rather slender brunette of medium height, with an oval face full of expression and energy, and remarkably beautiful eyes." She was only twenty-five years old at the time of her death.

† "Sixteen Years in Siberia," p. 276.

Masukov promising to leave Kara of his own accord. He did not do so.

One day Madame Sigida asked for an interview with Masukov, and struck him in the face, hoping thus to bring the matter to an issue, and this was followed by a third "hunger strike" the most desperate of all, lasting sixteen days. These events being reported, the Governor, General Korv, directed that severe disciplinary measures should be taken against all the Kara "politicals," and that Madame Sigida should receive one hundred blows with the "rods" in presence of the surgeon, but without previous medical examination. The surgeon refused to be present; but on November 6, 1889, Bobrovsky, the officer who had removed Madame Kovalsky to Nerchinsk, came to Kara and immediately carried out the flogging. The unfortunate woman was carried back unconscious into the prison, where she died two days later, whether from her injuries or by poison is not known. On the night of the 10th, Maria Kovalevsky, Maria Kaluzhny, and Nadeshda Smirnitsky were brought from their cells to the prison hospital, having procured and taken poison, and there they died, one after another. Five days later twenty male prisoners were found to have poisoned themselves, but of these all recovered, save Ivan Kaluzhny, brother of the victim just named, and Sergius Bobokhov, who died on the 16th.

The remains of these six heroes lie under rough wooden crosses in the graveyard at Kara, but their "souls go marching on."

CHAPTER XVI

FELIX VOLKHOVSKY

Of near friends it is hard to write, and happily in this case no such effort is necessary. For, while Felix Volkhovsky—at once the poet and the statesman of the revolutionary propaganda, as Stepniak was its soldier, and Perovsky and Figner were its avenging angels—must figure prominently in any picture of the revolutionary movement, he has stood for ten years so noticeably before the English-speaking world, his self-imposed mission of education has been so successful, that no more than a reminder of this fine and powerful personality is here called for. He arrived among us, like Kropotkin and other earlier refugees, poor, and unknown; and I well remember my sensations on finding him directly afterwards in an obscure lodging in Islington. Within a year or two his articles in *Free Russia* were already looked for by those interested in foreign affairs, and he had published a little volume of fairy tales marked by a strange charm that one only understood when one came to understand the man. Then, as time passed, he was gradually recognized in the press and on the platform as the veteran spokesman of a cause which, notwithstanding its appeal to the sympathies of all free and humane people, seemed to gain nothing by the unceasing sacrifices it exacted. Though weakened by long years of imprisonment and

exile, the fiery spirit in this frail body has never flagged. When others were weary and depressed, he stood staunch, "never doubting clouds would break." Now that the day of justification has dawned, let us not forget to honour those who through the night prepared the way for victory. In any western country, Volkhovsky would take a prominent place in political and literary life, as a cultured, catholic, and sagacious Radical. Russia will remember him as a second Herzen, an unpaid ambassador who, at a difficult juncture, not unworthily represented to the outer world the great soul of his people.

Born in South Russia in 1846, Felix Volkhovsky was only twenty-two years old when, as a student in the University of Moscow, he first learned what it meant to be ruled by an irresponsible police. He had been engaged in collecting subscriptions to buy cheap editions of well-known works of history and political economy, for distribution among workmen and peasants, and some of his letters had been opened. This led to a search of the rooms where he lived with his mother. Nothing of any consequence was found; yet he was removed to the office of the secret police, and thence to the prison of the "Third Section," in St. Petersburg, where he was confined for seven months, without any charge being preferred or any form of trial gone through. There were, however, frequent "investigations," of which he writes: "Every fortnight or so, and sometimes every week, during these seven months, I was brought before a committee of generals entrusted with the conduct of my case. The inquiry was conducted in their presence by the secretary, and after he had finished, I was asked to write down my answers. The general character of the committee's behaviour to me was such as to impress me with the idea that I was a desperate

FELIX VOLKHOVSKY.

KATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY.

NICHOLAS TCHAYKOVSKY.

culprit, that they knew all about my doings, and that my only chance of obtaining a mitigated punishment lay in frank confession. If I asked, by way of reply, with what I was charged, the secretary told me that I knew as well as he did, and then proceeded with his inquiries. Did I know L——? When had I first met him, and when did I last see him? With whom did he consort? Who were my friends? And so on. In a few days I had again to face a similar ordeal, with this difference, that now my answers to the previous inquiries had been examined and sifted and stood in witness against me, and I well knew that any slightest admissions I might have made would be used against me. And so each examination was more terrifying than the previous one. Were I to confess that I knew any one by name, immediately that person became suspected, and so from the beginning I had to be on my guard and say as little as possible. In this my first imprisonment, these examinations were not such torture as they afterwards became. I knew but few people, and there was really nothing whatever to conceal. But even then, in those tedious months of 1868, I soon came to dread the summons to a new examination as a positive torture. For many days after such an inquiry I used to spend my time thinking over the questions, and striving to recall the exact words of my answers, fearing all the while that some chance word might be used to the undoing of some innocent person. The man who invented such a species of inquiry should take high rank as a torturer. The rack of the Inquisition was more brutal, but certainly not so subtly cruel."

After transference for a month to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, Volkhovsky was liberated, a stage nearer, we may be sure, to being a good revolutionist. It was, however, not only without specific

charge, but without any cause whatever, that he was again arrested in Moscow, where he had obtained a librarianship, in the following year. After three months in a filthy cell, with bad food, he was again transferred to the St. Petersburg fortress. Here he spent one year, and a second year in another of the city prisons, the confinement and insufficient food seriously affecting his health. At last, in 1872, after two years and three months of preliminary detention, he was indicted, along with eighty-two of Netchayev's alleged co-conspirators, but found not guilty, and released. He now married, and moved to the Caucasus, and thence to Odessa, where he obtained a post as a chief clerk to the city council. But he was by this time a convinced Radical, and threw himself into the rising propagandist movement with such strength as he had. "During the trial," he says, "I was utterly exhausted, and now, on entering life again, I had to learn what an innocent man in Russia may have to suffer. I had been so steeped in silence and solitude that the noises of life almost drove me mad. I cannot describe the state of uncontrollable excitement into which the ordinary events of life threw me. For weeks I fought in vain for self-control. My nervous system was so weakened that it was long before my health improved."

In the same year he was arrested for the third time and lodged in the Pugachov tower of the Moscow central prison. Here his cell was lit by one small window, about two feet square, triply protected, first by large wooden bars, then thick iron bars and crossbars, and outside a thick wire screen. "It can be imagined that, under these conditions, very little light struggled into my cell. Even in summer I could not read for more than three hours a day; and even with the aid of the bad petroleum lamp with which I was provided, I

could only employ my intellect for some six hours out of the twenty-four. For more than eighteen hours each day, then, I was in total darkness." After some months he was transferred to the St. Petersburg fortress, where he was confined for a whole year in "such solitude as I had never even imagined." The food was bad; the one tiny window of the cell was overshadowed by the wall of the bastion; the allowance of exercise was very insufficient; but the chief torment was the dead quietness. At length Volkhovsky's health broke down completely. "I gradually became deaf; thus communication by knocking was not possible for me. Sometimes in the past the gaoler, out of pity, had spoken with me, of course in a low tone of voice, but this solace too was denied to me by my increasing deafness. I then drained to the dregs the bitterness of solitary confinement. Between me and life my gaolers had at last managed to draw an impenetrable shroud, and there in my cell I lay for hours together, wondering when the end would come. I had almost unlearned the power of speech. I remember that when, about this time, my mother once visited me I could not say to her what I wanted to say. I had forgotten the most ordinary words in my Russian vocabulary, nor could I make the effort that might have enabled me at length to remember them." Just in time to save his reason he was transferred to the House of Preliminary Detention, and there he was kept till the day of his trial, October 18, 1877. It was during this period that Bogolubov, one of the imprisoned "politicals," was flogged by order of General Trepov, prefect of St. Petersburg, and that Vera Zassulitch came up from her remote country home and fired the shot that was regarded, not only by the jury but by Russian society generally, as a laudable act of vindication.

I have explained the significance of the "Trial of the 193" as a supreme instance of the wickedness and folly of "administrative" punishment, and as marking the point of transition from the period of propaganda to that of open and violent resistance. The greater number of those arrested had already been released. Of those at length brought to trial, Leo Tikhomirov, one of them, has written: "When I had occasion to see this crowd of prisoners together I was struck with horror. They were all thin and emaciated, with jaundiced cheeks, sharp features, and inflamed eyes. In truth, we were very much like a gang of madmen. Every one was enervated, ill, and continually irritable. Work and books were alike refused; we only awaited the judgment. The mere thought of these continual delays, which had kept us in prison for three or four years, drove us well-nigh to madness." I have already pointed out, in fact, that, of those actually charged, five died during the first days of the trial. Of Volkhovsky, Tikhomirov says: "He seemed crushed by his imprisonment. His hair was commencing to turn grey, and he had become deaf. He was almost always ill. Only a few weeks before he had received the news of the death of his wife, whom he loved passionately. In this short time he seemed to have become an old man, although he was only a little over thirty years of age. Older relatively than the others, he was, besides, a very capable man, and more experienced than the other members of the group."

These sufferings and their injustice must be remembered — Volkhovsky, for instance, had been thrice arrested and had spent seven years in solitary confinement, and this was the first time he had been tried— and it must be remembered also, in reading of the following episode, that the Court consisted of five

senators nominated by the Tsar, that everything was done to prevent any appeal to public sympathy, and that Russia was not yet reconciled to the revocation of the judicial reforms of ten years earlier. "They put to us some purely formal questions. Felix Volkhovsky rose and very politely begged the Court to be so good as to permit him to approach the Bench, as he was ill and desired to give his explanations, but being deaf in one ear he could not hear the judges at the distance at which he was placed. The President allowed this. Then Felix began to explain. At the outset he showed the Court the arbitrary treatment of which he had been the victim; he showed how the injustice of the examining magistrates had broken his life. He had consoled himself up to that hour by the thought that that Court would be able to punish injustice, and that public opinion, informed of the matter, would chastise his oppressors. He had befooled himself. That Court from the first stage had acted with the same arbitrariness.

"Here the President interrupted him. But Volkhovsky was evidently in good form. He cited many of the paragraphs of the Penal Code, and proved to the Court that it was violating the law. He concluded by the declaration that he had no longer any confidence in the Court, and that he protested and refused to submit to it. The speech was brief but well conceived, and so much the more effective in that it couched the bitterest reproaches in the terms of a politeness exaggerated even to the point of irony.

"The President appeared confounded, especially when the accused rose, one after the other, to declare that they shared the opinion expressed by Volkhovsky. When the examination was opened each rose and declared that he had no confidence in the Court, that he would refuse

to reply to it, and that he would refuse even to remain in the place. The President did not wish to dismiss us, but the accused began to talk at the top of their voices. They laughed, they protested, and, in fact, prevented the Court from continuing its sitting. Then the angry President ordered us back to prison, taking note of the names of all those who would not submit. That was a threat. . . . So began the great protest which was prolonged for three months, for each group had to protest separately. . . . All St. Petersburg spoke of the trial; the lawyers demonstrated to the judges and the public all its injustices. We were avenged."

In the end Volkhovsky was found guilty of being "a member of a secret society formed to overthrow the existing form of government *in some more or less distant future.*" The words I have italicized saved him from the death sentence. He was condemned to exile in Siberia for life with the loss of certain civil rights. This last penalty meant that he could not maintain himself by teaching or writing, but must earn his bread as a labourer; happily the police cannot always secure their full pound of flesh.

In 1878 the new rule of treating "politicals" like common criminals was not yet established. When the railway journey to Nijni Novgorod and the river journey to Perm were covered, therefore, Volkhovsky and his fellows enjoyed the tempered mercy of a rough cart, and he, as of noble birth, was not fettered. After several weeks, he reached his place of exile, Tukalinsk, in the province of Tobolsk, a large village on the Siberian post-road, consisting of four or five brick buildings and a number of log houses and huts. In this desolate place he remained for four years. He was then allowed to remove to the city of Tomsk, where he

managed to make a secret connection with one of the local newspapers. Here Mr. Kennan met Volkhovsky, of whom he says—

"He was about thirty-eight years of age at the time I made his acquaintance, and was a man of cultivated mind, and high aspirations. He knew English well, was familiar with American history and literature, and had, I believe, translated into Russian many of the poems of Longfellow. He was one of the most winning and lovable men that it has ever been my good fortune to know; but his life had been a terrible tragedy. His health had been shattered by long imprisonment in the fortress of Petropavlovsk, his hair was prematurely grey, and when his face was in repose there seemed to be an expression of profound melancholy in his dark brown eyes."

Other touching notes will be found in course of Mr. Kennan's narrative. In 1888 Volkhovsky was allowed to remove to Irkutsk, but was expelled without explanation; removed to Troitskosavsk, was again expelled, and then determined to attempt to escape. Having got together a little money, he boldly took the post-road to Tchita, in the disguise of a retired army officer, boarded a river steamer at Stretinsk, and after several times narrowly escaping arrest, got across the Ussuri prairies on horseback, was taken on board a British steamer at Vladivostok, and reached London, *viâ* Vancouver and Washington, in June, 1890, a free man at last.

During these eleven years of his exile great changes had been wrought in the situation in European Russia. The revolutionary propaganda, mercilessly repressed, had assumed more and more violent forms with each increase of governmental severity. Spies had been killed as long ago as 1876, but the attack on Trepov, on

January 24, 1878, was the first attempt on the life of a high official, and its reception helped to precipitate the acute phase of the struggle. The revelations consequent upon the "Trial of the 193," and the execution of Kovalsky in Odessa, were answered by the murder of General Mezentsev, chief of the "Third Section," on the Nevsky Prospect in broad daylight on August 14, 1878. Wholesale arrests followed, and all political cases were referred to military tribunals. In February, 1879, Prince Kropotkin, Governor of Kharkov, where the prison *régime* had reached the last point of barbarity, was shot by Goldenberg; and on April 2, Soloviev fired five shots at the Tsar without effect. In the following four months thirteen men were hung in St. Petersburg, Kiëv, and Odessa—a new and most horrible experience in Russian life—the prisons were filled by wholesale raids, and practically the whole country was placed under martial law. In reply the revolutionists resolved upon the assassination of the Tsar. At the congresses of Lipetsk and Voronezh in the summer of 1879, when the old "Land and Liberty" party split up into the "Tcherny Perediel," and the "Narodnya Volya," and the "Executive Committee" was organized, there were no less than forty-seven volunteers for this task, including such women as Sophia Perovsky, Vera Figner, and Jessy Helfmann. For nearly seventeen months these attempts continued—the Moscow, Odessa, and Alexandrovsk mines; the Winter Palace Explosion; and the final act of March 1, 1881, for which Grinevsky —who was killed by his own bomb—Jeliabov, Perovsky, Kibalchich, Michailov and Ryssakov paid with their lives.

Still the desperate duel continued. In March, 1882, the notorious General Strelnikov was killed at Odessa; and in December, 1883, the yet more famous spy, Colonel

Sudyekin, was assassinated in St. Petersburg. During these years the revolutionists directed their efforts, not without some success, toward provoking a military revolt. Fifteen soldiers of the St. Petersburg fortress were tried in 1882, and in September, 1884, a number of officers were condemned for seditious activity, including some of those mentioned in our chapter on Schlusselburg.

Then, gradually, robbed of hundreds of its most daring spirits, the movement subsided. During his reign, Alexander II. had executed thirty "politicals," thrown hundreds into hard-labour prisons, and exiled thousands. In his first four years, Alexander III. executed one woman and fourteen men.

According to the Russian Revolutionary Almanack of 1883, the Executive Committee had in its ranks on the eve of March 1, 1881, nearly five hundred men. From March to August, 1881, over four thousand arrests were made on political charges or suspicion. The common people had not risen; the intellectuals had spent themselves. M. Plehve and M. Pobyedonostsev thought that this was the end. So it was—for the moment; but they lived to learn that among a great people the passion for liberty can never be extinguished.

CHAPTER XVII

STEPNIAK AND TERRORISM

THE printed biographies of Stepniak were long a matter of amusement to his friends. One standard book of reference published, under the heading of "Stepniak, Sergius Michael Dragomanoff," a good summary of the career of Professor Dragomanov, a friend of Stepniak, and, like him, a political refugee, who died at Sofia in 1894! But this was quite a pleasant error as compared with some others, dictated by undisguised hostility. I mention it only as an odd testimony to Stepniak's modesty and reserve. He had an innate antipathy to the commoner kinds of publicity and self-advertisement. Among friends, and in his own little *salon* in West London, he was frankness itself; but when the destiny of distracted Russia was in discussion, the man was lost in the cause. The general facts of his career were known to his friends; for the rest, there is in his own published work the best memorial of a full and strenuous life.

Sergey Mikhailovitch Kravchinsky—for that was his little-known natal name—was born on July 14, 1852. His parents were people of substance, who united White Russian with Ukraïnian blood, the father being a physician. His early life was spent uneventfully at his country home in South Russia, whence he was started upon the usual course terminating in the Military

Gymnasium. He received his commission as an artillery officer in 1869. It was in the Army that he began his propagandist efforts on behalf of this chained democracy; and it was to the Army that he long looked with especial hope for aid. He left the service in 1871, joined the chief of the Tchaykovsky circles, and was one of the first of the effective missionaries to the peasantry,—that devoted band of cultured and well-born men and women, who, sacrificing every worldly prospect, went to live in the villages to help the *mujik* rise to his opportunities, and to spread the seeds of democratic thought. In 1873 he spent six months among the rationalist sect of the Molokani, studying their tenets and life. In the following year, along with another retired officer—Demetrius Rogachóv, a schoolmate in the Artillery School at St. Petersburg and a man of equally strong physique—Stepniak went on tramp in the province of Tver disguised as a sawyer; and the journey of these two men became in after years the subject of a legend of how two giants went to preach liberty among the peasants. Being suspected by a landlord, they were denounced, arrested, and sent to the nearest prison under guard, but managed on the way to win over one of their custodians, who aided them to escape. Reaching Moscow, Stepniak was harboured by the partner of his later, as of his earlier, struggles, Felix Volkhovsky, who describes him as at this time "a rosy-faced and smiling youth, with not a shade of that sallow complexion which he acquired later on."

Stepniak had just begun to write for the masses of the people, and his political fable, "The Story of a Penny," had a wide vogue. He was now an "illegal man," an outlaw moving about with a borrowed passport, or with none at all. He took an active part in the early propaganda among working men in St.

Petersburg, lecturing to them on history and political economy, and forming a group which left important traces on the movement. As the "White Terror" of the final years of Alexander II. reached its height, all hope of anything like constitutional propaganda was crushed out violently, and the awful era which culminated in the murder of the Tsar was ushered in. Stepniak—affected especially by the news of prison tortures and outrages upon old comrades—threw himself into the hideous combat with the fire and capacity of a born conspirator. The time has not even yet come when the story of his expedition to St. Petersburg, and his operations there in 1875 and 1876, can be fully told. It has been stated that it was Stepniak who planned the escape of Prince Kropotkin from the Nicholas Prison Hospital in St. Petersburg. Stepniak gave the credit of the arrangements to Kropotkin himself; but Mr. George Kennan told me that it was Dr. Weimar (one of the most accomplished physicians of St. Petersburg, and a friend of the then Empress; he afterwards died in exile in Siberia) who alone planned the release. The story of a similar affair, for the conduct of which Stepniak was responsible, one of the few of his undertakings which completely failed, and then by no fault of his own, I have heard from the lips of the subject of it, Felix Volkhovsky. Volkhovsky, at the time imprisoned in Moscow, succeeded in establishing communications with friends outside the prison, and especially with Stepniak, then an outlaw, whom the police would have given much to be able to arrest. Stepniak constructed a very simple plan of escape. Volkhovsky was to profess to be willing to make a confession which would require his temporary removal from the prison. Stepniak was to wait on the road with a swift sledge, which the prisoner was to endeavour to reach from his own.

Unfortunately Stepniak was called away to St. Petersburg, and his substitute was a less able hand. Volkhovsky tried, but unsuccessfully, to throw snuff into the eyes of the gendarmes who guarded him, and when he had got upon the rescuing vehicle, but before it had started, was caught by the collar and dragged back to the central prison, to suffer harder penalties than ever.

In a campaign of vengeance—though vengeance in the name of outraged humanity—a man of so much resource, and yet of such genuine moral worth, could not but make himself felt. He became one of the leading members of the revolutionary party, was entrusted with some of its most desperate ventures, and its closest secrets. In the spring of 1878, together with Zundelevich, he smuggled into Russia the type and machinery needed for the establishment of a secret printing-office, and took part in the production, in the heart of the capital, and under the very nose of the police, of the revolutionary organ, *Land and Liberty*, the first number of which appeared in August of that year.

Stepniak was not allowed to witness the culmination of the Terrorist struggle. He had now become so urgently "wanted" by the police that a short period of quarantine in Geneva was considered advisable; and, at last, after being implicated in one of the most dangerous and daring affairs of the revolutionary campaign, it became a question of choice between capture and emigration. On the pressure of his colleagues, and under pretext of a special commission, Stepniak left the country; and, the situation meanwhile changing, he devoted himself henceforth to rousing the Western world to sympathy with the victims of the Tsardom. The English and American Societies of Friends of Russian Freedom are tangible evidence of

the success of this enterprise. He was also one of the founders of the Russian Free Press Fund in London in 1891, an organization supported by the contributions of Russians holding lawful positions in the Empire, and aiming to supply the need of a free press by smuggling prohibited literature across the frontier. Stepniak's personal contribution to the literature of exposure and agitation is large and notable. After his escape from Russia in 1880, he wrote "Underground Russia," a series of "Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life," full of dramatic interest and the charm of strangely attractive personalities. This was published in England, in translation from the Italian, in 1882. There followed, at short intervals after his arrival in England in 1884, "The Russian Peasantry," "Russia under the Tsars," "The Russian Storm Cloud," a novel called "The Career of a Nihilist," "Nihilism as it Is," a translation of some of his Russian pamphlets with an Introduction by Dr. Spence Watson, and "King Log and King Stork: A Study of Modern Russia."

On the afternoon of December 23, 1895, I received from his colleague and neighbour, Felix Volkhovsky, the inexpressible shock of the first news of Stepniak's death. Short-sighted and always prone to absorption, he had been caught that morning by a train on a notorious level-crossing at Bedford Park, the London suburb where he lived, and killed instantly. He left a widow, but no children. The demonstrations of sympathy and admiration that accompanied the funeral will never be forgotten by those who witnessed them. Flowers, telegrams, and letters poured in from Russian groups in Switzerland, Germany, Paris, Vienna, and New York, from Armenian and Polish popular leaders, and from Englishmen of all classes, including University men, Members of Parliament, and ministers of religion.

From the home, where Nicholas Tchaykovsky uttered an eloquent exordium to his fellow exiles, the body was taken by road to Waterloo, where the sense of personal and even national loss was merged in a manifestation of the growing sentiment of democratic internationalism more striking perhaps than any scene on English soil since the days of Garibaldi. A procession of Russian Jews from Whitechapel came behind a band and a black and crimson flag, the women bearing wreaths marked to the memory of "the foe of oppression" and "the friend of freedom." To the vast throng that filled the approach and south courtyard of the station short addresses were delivered by Mr. Volkhovsky and Prince Kropotkin, Dr. Spence Watson for the British Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, Herr Bernstein for the German Social Democratic Party, Signor Malatesta for the Italian Socialists, Mr. Avetis Nazarbek (in French) for the Armenian Revolutionary Party, Mr. S. Kahan (in Yiddish) for the East London Jews, and a spokesman of the Polish revolutionary parties. Mr. William Morris, Mr. John Burns, M.P., Mr. Herbert Burrows, and Mr. Felix Moscheles, represented British democratic parties, and Madame Vera Zassulitch and Mr. George Lazarev were among the Russians present. From Woking Station about two hundred friends walked through the mud and rain to the crematorium. As I sat in the silent chapel awaiting the incineration, I was proud that England's soil is still free alike to her own children and to the outcasts of less happy lands. England herself is in many little-recognized ways the gainer by this hospitality. To know a man like Stepniak is in itself a liberal education. A mere acquaintance with him has given a new turn to a number of English lives, widening their social and political horizons, relieving with a gloss of romantic interest their more immediate

and, too often, squalid domestic troubles. It has stimulated the feelings of international responsibility and brotherhood. The cause which he represented is far advanced in a more promising phase than that in which he personally participated; in the outer world it has no lack of friends. But the death of so young and vigorous a man, a personality so massive, a spirit at once so strong and so gentle, was a grievous loss, and not only to his own countrymen.

In appearance and momentary contact Stepniak might give an impression of gruffness and grimness which was not really justified, but was due, in the first place, to his short-sightedness, and, in some degree, to his tendency to fall into "brown studies." The severe and almost terrible expression in the face of his most popular photograph does not actually bespeak any trait which was revealed in contact with his friends, except the volcanic force and decision of character that his whole career showed, and that never overruled his humane, generous, and gentle spirit. Of this gentleness I remember many instances. He was most tender to animals and to children. When little Max H. (who, with his father, had come under the anti-Semitic ban in Russia) first took the musical world of London by storm, Stepniak was indefatigable in securing him support, and afterwards the burly exile varied his work in lecturing and in editing *Free Russia* by giving the precocious boy lessons in mathematics, with the help of a blackboard he had made himself. He was a good deal more proud of his power of using the carpenter's tools than his power of constructing a novel in an alien tongue. Like all his Russian colleagues, he was extremely abstemious; and, indeed, the simplicity of his life in this country gave strength to the impression gathered from such accounts as exist of the innocent

propagandist movement in Russia during the early seventies, in which the lad Kravchinsky received his baptism of fire. His sympathies were as catholic as his tastes. No democratic movement but could count on his ready and energetic assistance, and in giving it he showed a wonderful ability to use all the new methods which he found customary in the free West. I have notes before me of a conversation I had with him in 1890, when he lived in St. John's Wood, and it covers Irish Home Rule, the relations of Bismarck and the Kaiser, the depressing spectacle of the prostitution of France to the Russian autocracy, a discussion on Russian education, and a characteristic remark to the effect that his own natural bent, if he could have been undisturbed by current human needs, was rather towards literature than politics. The pretty home in Bedford Park in which he settled down after a not very successful lecturing tour in America, and in which he lived, with some quiet intervals in a Surrey village, to the end, was the bourne of all manner of helpless foreigners. Jews, Stundists, Poles, and Armenians sought Stepniak's board, and his powerful pen was always at their service. A long manuscript in his writing which he sent to me with the aim of securing wider publicity lies before me, and is full of painful reminders of what will go down to posterity as a pre-eminently shameful epoch of European history. It is the translation of the text of a "Protest addressed to the Great Powers of Europe by Kilikian Prisoners," dated from the central prison of Aleppo in August, 1892, and recites some of the infamous misdeeds of the Turkish officials in the town of Zeitun, which, as long ago as 1866, had been driven into a state of incipient rebellion by the Moslem tyranny. Stepniak also watched the English labour movement with the utmost interest.

It was due very largely to Stepniak's influence in his early life that the Russian radical propaganda developed out of the Anarchism of Bakunin in a general Socialistic direction. He was to the end a convinced Socialist, and he became a member of the Fabian Society. But, right or wrong, Stepniak's Socialism was a calm and reasoned intellectual conclusion. Nothing could be more untrue than to represent him as a fanatic. The division between the peasantist and the proletarian sections, which long weakened the movement in Russia, was contrary to all his instincts; and, as he held that a union of these forces was essential to success, so also he insisted that no opportunity must be lost of co-operation between revolutionists and liberal opponents of the oligarchy. He was, in the best sense, a practical politician. He saw, even in the height of that awful time in which outrage was adopted as a deliberate policy in Russia, that the revolutionary movement must be guided into a political channel. In the calmer days of his English life his comments upon international and national politics were full of insight, judicial fairness, and common sense; and a reviewer of his last book did him no more than justice when he said that in a Russian Parliament Stepniak would have found his way to the front rank by the simple force of his statesmanlike qualities. An instance at once of his fairness and his encyclopædic knowledge may here be given. It has been said that his political tendency was directly opposed to that of Bakunin, but, as one who knew the father of philosophical Anarchism and the whole circumstances of the controversy, he was both anxious and able to do him justice. I had a long conversation with him on this subject *àpropos* of the allegations made by M. Felix Dubois in his book, "The Anarchist Peril"; and he decidedly denied the suggestion

that Bakunin was a wire-puller, a traitor, and a spy. He showed that Bakunin's Panslavism was a quite consistent democratic and radical creed, not in any way to be confused with the later Panslavism of autocracy and orthodoxy. He thought it ridiculous but perfectly honest, and held that Bakunin was faithful to his ideas to the end of his life. He went on to give me chapter and verse for the statement that Bakunin was never specially favoured either by the King of Saxony, the Austrian Government, or the Russian Government, and was never received with suspicion by the then Russian revolutionists in London. Bakunin's ideas, he added, had a vogue of only about four years in Russia (1874–8), and "it would not be too much to say that there is to-day no Anarchism at all in Russia."

It was not alone the interest of his political experiences and knowledge that drew one to Stepniak's home. If it be a little difficult to accept his statement of his own intellectual preferences quoted above, it is still certain that he watched every literary and artistic movement of the day, and showed a very exceptional critical capacity. He was able to speak of most well-known English writers—especially of Thackeray and Dickens, and of George Meredith, by whom he had been very kindly received—with a familiarity and keenness of appreciation that put the average Englishman to shame; and this shame became positive confusion as he passed from the great figures of our own literature to the writers, musicians, and artists of Germany and France. The clearest and most charming sketch of Russian literature I have met with was an *extempore* lecture which he gave to a little coterie of young Bohemians in London who revel in the wild title of "The Cemented Bricks." He was not always an effective lecturer. It is, after

all, as a fertile writer that he will chiefly be remembered, save for his active connection with the "dynamic period" of the revolutionary movement in Russia, of which it remains to speak. His novel, "The Career of a Nihilist," is, he told me, to a large extent autobiographical. It is an open secret that it was only upon the eve of publication that he withdrew his name from the title-page of the Stundist novel, "The Highway of Sorrow," to which Miss Hesba Stretton's name is alone appended. His translated volume of stories by the Russian novelist Korolenko reminds me that it was at Stepniak's heterodox *salon* that I met more than one "legal" Russian; and that Dr. Brandes, the eminent Danish critic, and many another interesting figure, received the exile's hospitality.

It is unfortunately now improbable that we shall ever have a full and accurate account of this extraordinary and romantic life. This involves less loss, perhaps, than it might in many a case, for the personal element is strong in most of his books, and, in "Underground Russia" and his novel, at least, we have many idealized and generalized pictures from his own experience. It has, however, facilitated the circulation of mistaken and sometimes malicious stories of his career, which cannot but confuse the historical student. An attack, clearly vindictive, consisted in the circulation in the early part of 1894 of a pamphlet with the title "Russian Memorandum," and its substantial embodiment in an article over the signature "Ivanoff" in the *New Review* of January in that year. The pamphlet was dated "November, 1892;" but it reached a number of prominent men in London by post from Paris only fourteen months later. The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom was charged with raising funds "for the organization of dynamite conspiracies in Russia,"

and Stepniak personally with pretending to accept English constitutionalism and taking English gold while he was inciting to deeds of violence in Russia in the Russian pamphlets issued by himself and his colleagues of the Russian Free Press Fund. No unbiassed person who knew Stepniak could entertain for a moment the suspicion that he could be guilty of such baseness. As a matter of fact, he always held that men inside the Empire alone were, and could be, responsible for the form and guidance of the revolutionary movement, and that anything like incitement to outrage from the outside would be as cowardly as it would be futile. When this allegation appeared, he broke his rule of a dignified and scornful reticence as to all merely personal attacks by publishing an English translation of the pamphlets in question; and these appeared, with a preface by Dr. Spence Watson and other supplementary matter, under the title of "Nihilism as it Is."

As to Stepniak's attitude toward terrorism in the abstract, there is no doubt that his opinion underwent a development as the failure of the policy became evident, and as he grew more and more in appreciation of English ideas and methods. He never really abandoned his first moral standpoint; but there is a considerable difference in tone between the rather wild glorification of extreme measures with which "Underground Russia," his first work, abounds, and the final pages of the book he completed just before his death. The difference is easily explained to any student by the change in the circumstances.

There is, perhaps, nothing more difficult for the average burgess of a settled constitutional State to believe than that a conspirator—above all a terrorist—could be, after all, an essentially good man and a distinct moral force. It is well, on the whole, that this

prejudice should exist, and that the toleration of warfare and the privileges of the soldier's calling should be restricted to the authorized mercenaries of the nation. But it is necessary sometimes to recall that the line is quite an arbitrary one, and not to be drawn by rational men until all the circumstances of the individual case have been fully laid before the public mind and conscience. We Englishmen are but poorly equipped with the historic imagination necessary for this difficult judicial task; but the tributes offered over the remains of Sergius Stepniak showed that British common sense is equal to the demand which even so exceptional a career and character make upon it. If we had less faith in the absorbent and sobering qualities of the English character, we might feel that there was danger in the promiscuous cultivation of this kind of sentiment. It would be too much to expect in every political exile either Stepniak's hearty regard for our institutions and ideas, or his personal dignity and worth, his combination of strength and gentleness, of resolution and judiciality. The generous welcome which, in the name of her own freedom, England offers to the outcasts of less fortunate lands is not, however, blind or unconditional. Personal intercourse with Stepniak during his life in this country bred spontaneously the conclusions which the independent student was to reach by his slower method. Stimulated by this intercourse, study has made possible something like an objective explanation of one of the most awful episodes of recent history. In Stepniak's career the period of active revolution seemed to be focussed and typified. He brought with him to these islands a section, as it were, from the life of his country; and it was at once his and our good fortune that he was able to complete a record of personal and national development such as few political leaders

can leave behind them for their own justification and the enlightenment of history.

Three of Stepniak's literary treatments of terrorism lie before me as I write. The first is in the crude, though thrilling, rhapsodies of "Underground Russia." It must be remembered, in justice to this work—by which its author was perhaps most widely known—that it was written from the outside in the feverish days during which the battle it described was reaching its climax, and that it was written as a *feuilleton* for an Italian paper. A soberer view, in the *Contemporary* for March, 1884, distinguishes very clearly between dynamite outrages in the free West and the only method still available in Russia against an unscrupulous despotism. In the work which he had issued but a few days before his death, "King Log and King Stork," the influence of maturer reflection and of the English climate is still more evident. On the following words Stepniak's claim and that of his fellows to the sympathy of good and humane men and women may be said finally to rest. "Terrorism," he wrote, "is the worst of all methods of revolutionary warfare, and there is only one thing that is worse still—slavish submissiveness and the absence of any protest. We could not look upon the revival of it otherwise than as a disgrace for Russia. Yet it would be a worse disgrace for Russia if she is not able to produce by way of protest anything stronger than terrorism. Now, there is only one means of preventing the possibility of such an outburst, and of turning to good account popular movements when they begin. It is for the whole of the Liberal Opposition to avail itself of the present temporary lull, and by a broad and energetic action to compel the unsettled Government to change the drift of its politics."

At the time of his death, Prince Kropotkin thus

wrote of him: "He believed in a popular movement; at the same time, however, he believed that it should be met by a similar movement among educated people. The slavish spirit was odious to him in every form. He hated oppression of the individual wherever he met it, in public life, in the family, in a political party. The feeling of personal fear was altogether unknown to him. The feeling of self-conceit did not exist in him, even in germ. He did not understand narrow party feeling; he always held firmly to his opinions, but he was deeply conscious that no great cause is ever affected by one party alone, that, for the success of great social changes, the efforts of different parties are necessary, that every one of them is indispensable, and that they must not strive to stifle one another, but march, each in its own way, to one common aim, to liberation. And all this emanated in him, not from a theory, but from the very depth of his nature, from the feeling of justice which was engendered in him. When a man of different opinions was talking to him, his intelligent and kindly eyes gleamed with that thorough understanding of the most subtle movements of mind and heart, that responsiveness to another man's views and feelings, of which only great poets are capable."

The late Professor York Powell wrote: "It was as a charming companion and a most appreciative student and critic of literature that Sergius Stepniak was known to me. He was absolutely sincere, sound in his judgment, and anxious to get at the fairest point of view. In these characteristics and in his wide reading in many tongues (he could read, I believe, every European language save Bask), he reminded me of my master, Gudbrand Vigfusson. He was quick, too, in seizing the ideas of others and understanding their aspects. He was either silent, or he spoke frankly and directly,

never hesitating to speak the whole truth as he understood it and felt it, but with a noble kind of courtesy that could but appease the most sensitive. He was so hard-working, so earnest, so stern to himself, so sympathetic, that I think he had it in him to have done good work in literature later on. A truthful, unselfish, upright, warm-hearted, and determined man, reasonable in all his thoughts and ways, as free from vanity and every base taint as any being I have known."

Dr. Spence Watson gives us another glimpse of this "beautiful, fertilizing, and powerful soul": "When the news reached this country that Madame Sigida had succumbed beneath the cruelties and indignities she had suffered, Stepniak suffered terribly. I then saw the man who had been the moving spirit of the great Terrorist movement, the war of revenge waged against the oppressors by the oppressed; the stern, bold, determined avenger of the wrong done by brutal power. It was a grand, a terrible revelation." Dr. Watson adds: "I do not wish to speak about the loss the cause of freedom everywhere sustained. Our great men are mortal, their work is immortal. The lot of an exile is a hard one. He has friends about him, but where are those of his youth? The landscape is fair, but it is not that of home. However he may be respected and beloved in the land of his adoption, it is, at the best, a strange land. And it is sometimes cruel. The privations, the trials, the indignities, the annoyances, to which these men are subjected, are without number. Watched by foreign spies, visited and cross-questioned by English policemen whose friendship with the foreign spies is most distasteful to all right-minded citizens, life is made harder than it need be, though it must be hard at best. But Stepniak seemed to rise above all these things. They rolled away from him and left no trace of even momentary

annoyance. His mind was in his work; his heart was with his country; for her he was thankful to toil and strive. He was nothing, the Russian people were all, and, first and foremost, the Russian peasant, for his need was greatest. In their service and for them he lived; in their service he laid down his life."

I close with some words from the tribute of his comrade, F. Volkhovsky, to the memory of "the Bayard of the Russian Revolution": "The whole world bewails the loss, but the feeling of us Russians is one of double anguish. Not only have we lost in him a man who proved by his whole life that Russians are not born slaves, who would endure anything, any outrage, any humiliation, like dumb sheep; not only have we lost in him one who contributed much to the acknowledgment of the Russian national genius by other nationalities and made our ties of brotherhood with them stronger, but we have also to bear the feeling that in his native country there is not even so much soil for such a man as is required for his remains to rest in. There is only one consolation in this bitter thought: that, while Stepniak was robbed of his country by those who robbed her of everything they could, he has found a larger fatherland in the hearts of all the oppressed and all the generous ones of the whole world, his own people included. Let us not offend his memory, then, by even one moment of despair."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW GENERATION: DR. SOSKICE; MARK BROIDO

To short-sighted persons the revolutionary movement appeared to have passed away when the episode of the Terror closed. Certain organizations collapsed, it is true, for the lack of effective support from the masses; and the movement gradually assumed a new complexion as new forces and new circumstances gradually revealed themselves. Had it depended only upon a few leading figures, it would have been absolutely wiped out by the first merciless revenge of those in power. But it was always sporadic, dependent upon local emergencies and provocations, never centralized to any considerable degree. There were during the last years of Alexander III. a few political plots, a great many peasant riots and University disturbances, labour strikes, and fresh evidence of sedition in the army. The ravages of cholera and famine gave a new impetus to the seething discontent which was found on every side; and financial embarrassments and the direction of new light into the dark places of the Empire worked together seriously to sap the outside resources of the Tsardom. The protest of the Liberal constitutionalists, and especially of the *zemstvo* men, though ineffective, never ceased. But the rapid development of events has been due, in the first place, to the younger *intelligenzia* gathered together in and around the Universities and

the professions dependent on higher education, and in the second place to the increasing collective activity of the town workmen, dating from the great and successful strike in St. Petersburg in 1896, the year of the coronation of Nicholas II. At the same time there have been numerous outbreaks among the disillusioned peasantry; and it should be added that the rise of the newer Nonconformist bodies and the spread of Leo Tolstoy's teaching, though apparently antagonistic to a political revolution, have really helped to produce a social awakening which was bound to have a political outcome.

University "disturbances"—the official word for public meetings—have for many years past been a prominent feature in the news from the dark Empire, to the confounding of the reader unacquainted with Russian history and the conditions of Russian life. The only other kind of disturbance of which we hear much is the strike of workmen; that, however, is so common an event at home that our only wonder is that it is not more frequent in a country where capitalism is in open alliance with the civil and military authorities, and where industrial grievances are of a much grosser character than any we know. But what is the meaning of this perpetual ferment in the Russian Universities? The British undergraduate is not exactly a lamb, but when he sets out to daub a statue, to mob a statesman, or to hoot a music-hall singer, he does not expect any public sympathy; and, in fact, when we hear of these escapades we think longingly of the nursery birch and the village horse-pond. Why should we be asked to sympathize with these Russian students and teachers?

Well, the Russian University reflects the peculiarity of Russian life. Here is a society which has given some

of the most conspicuous talents to the service of science, art, and morals, a society which follows and participates in the progress of the world's thought, and yet has no feeedom of thought or activity in its own sphere; a society which is now, as it was a century ago, at the mercy of the policeman and the censor. It is comparatively easy to dragoon, because it is numerically weak and socially removed from the life of the workman and peasantry, who make up nine-tenths of the population. Against a thoroughly militarized bureaucracy, the middle-class unit is helpless. The revolutionists of the late seventies and earlier eighties scored the sort of success the Boers obtained for a time in South Africa—the success of brains and devotion, which discredits and damages centralized mechanical power, but which must be overwhelmed in the long run. When and where the units are gathered in large numbers, however, there is always the material for new explosions. The factory and University are almost the only considerable social aggregations which are to be met with in Russian life; and the factories and the Universities are accordingly permanent centres of that effervescence which can find no other outlet. To say nothing of the fact that the elder Universities in this country are directly represented in Parliament, to say nothing of the political debates for which their "Unions" are famous, every British undergraduate who has a true conception of society will regard his University career as a preparation for the free use and enjoyment of those political rights which he will presently share with his fellow-citizens. The Russian student has to meet the same tests in regard to general culture as his Western contemporary, but he is faced by the crushing fact that in his after life the free exercise of his talents will be ruthlessly forbidden to him. It is only the aged and

impotent who can be expected to accept, without a murmur, this decree of perpetual exclusion from ranges of social activity to which the poorest and most ignorant in every other European country have access. Youth sees and feels even under the shadow of an oligarchy. As Stepniak said, in his "Russia under the Tsars," "When a government in possession of despotic power punishes as a crime the least show of opposition to its will, nearly all whom age has made cautious or wealth selfish, or who have given hostages to fortune, shun the strife. It is then that the leaders of the forlorn hope turn to the young, who, though they may lack knowledge and experience, are rarely wanting either in courage or devotion. It was thus in Italy at the time of the Mazzinian conspiracies; in Spain at the time of Riègo and Queroga; in Germany at the time of the Tugenbund, and again about the middle of the nineteenth century. If the transfer of the centre of political gravity to the young is more marked in Russia than it has been elsewhere, it is that the determining causes have been more powerful in their action and more prolonged in their duration."

Apart from the restrictions to which society at large is subjected, the Universities have always suffered the most rigorous administrative supervision and perpetual interference by the police agents, for whom every centre of thought is a centre of sedition, actual or potential. These petty tyrannies, obstinately continued throughout the last forty years, have entered into the tradition of society, and have given birth to a peculiar but regular series of reactions. At best, the Russian University is a tool and dependency of the despotic State, without any independence; the University professor a State officer, a *tchinovnik*, always in terror of denunciation for heresy or "political untrustworthiness." The old

story of the instruction to the professor of mathematics, that in speaking of triangles he should seek to raise the hearts of his pupils to heaven by recalling to them, through this image, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, is a piece of obscurantism not quite impossible even in this later day. "The University, in the eyes of the Government," said Tikhomirov in his "La Russie Politique et Sociale," "is one of the bureaux of the Department of Public Opinion of which Napoleon I. dreamed." But the view of the Government is one thing, the view of the youth, and of a good many others, too, of educated Russia, quite another. Hence a constant friction between the mass of undergraduates, supported more or less openly by many professors, and the civil authorities, and a constant hostility to any show of independence in the professorate, resulting on the one hand in eviction of recalcitrant professors (Stassulevitch, Kostomarov, Spassovitch, Dragomanov, Pipin, are names of some of the more celebrated victims of this kind), and on the other the reduction of the University staffs to a condition of intellectual mediocrity and moral impotence. And still the University is looked upon as the Mecca of youthful effort and aspiration. Most of the students come from comparatively, or even positively, poor families of the middle class or the petty nobility. They are quite ready to endure the extremes of penury if they can but manage to attend their classes. The teaching staff may be a feeble imitation of its Western prototypes; but there are the library, the museum, the laboratory; there are the specially light conditions of military service; there is liberty from the oppressive restrictions of the old-fashioned household; above all, there is the possibility of equal fellowship and friendship not to be found otherwise.

Under a rule such as that of the Russian bureaucracy,

the rest is natural consequence. The development of a certain corporate spirit in a university would be inevitable, even if it had not behind it, as it has in every Russian city, a long history of struggle and sacrifice. A few students meet for a simple discussion; if the police do not gather under the windows, it is only because they have spies inside. A forbidden book is found, or some criticism of the powers-that-be is overheard; arrest follows, and then imprisonment or deportation. The fellow-students of the victim gather together to discuss his case; their meeting is broken up by the police, and more arrests follow. Or the undergraduates wish to march in procession to the grave of some of the many leaders of Russian thought who have been murdered by the gaolers of the Autocracy; their procession is broken up by Cossacks armed with whips. A current of sympathetic discontent runs through educated society, and breaks out in other universities. Meetings are held, petitions are drawn up; then reprisals take place on the grand scale: scores, or even hundreds, of students are expelled, which means that their careers are ruined; the "ringleaders" are still more severely punished. A "students' strike" breaks out simultaneously in the large towns—St. Petersburg, Kiëv, Moscow, Kharkov, Kazan. This is by no means a rare occurrence; in the troubles of 1899 there were estimated to be 30,000 students on strike. So the duel drags on.

But four years ago, while it was making the false boast of having "abolished Siberian exile," the Tsar's Government decided on a new experiment in coercion, one which, after all, was as old as the "Emperor in jack-boots," Nicholas I. About 200 undergraduates—183 of Kiëv and 25 of St. Petersburg—were drafted into compulsory military service for periods of one, two,

or three years, for having taken part in certain meetings at which their grievances were ventilated: offences which might have been dealt with by Justices of the Peace, under Russian law, instead of by this absolutely arbitrary process, and for which the legal penalty could not have exceeded fines of a hundred roubles or brief terms of imprisonment. It is difficult for us Englishmen to appreciate the meaning of exile to the barracks of Eastern Asia; but it at once became evident that Russians of the educational class regarded it with, at least, as much horror as we should regard the rustication of a party of Oxford or Cambridge undergraduates to an Indian cantonment. The British army would not be exactly an ideal *milieu* for the completion of a University career; but the fate of Russian lads in the isolation of a Far Eastern outpost is indeed matter for pity and indignation. Their friends appealed, and not vainly, to "the conscience of the whole civilized world." In the consequent protest France led the way, as it was altogether best that she should. Over forty professors of French universities addressed to the professors of the Russian universities a letter, in which they pointedly "declined all solidarity" with men who had not only sacrificed the independence of the university in matters of internal discipline, but assisted the soldiery in a barbarous interference, and in over-riding the common law of the land. Similar protests arose in other lands. In Russia the incident gave rise to a crisis of the first magnitude, very large numbers of people of different classes taking part in open demonstrations against the authorities. St. Petersburg seethed with active discontent, and repeated demonstrations took place. On March 5, 1901 (the anniversary of the emancipation of the serfs), three hundred arrests were made, and on March 17 a peaceful gathering before and inside the Kazan Cathedral was

brutally attacked by Cossacks and police, eight or more students, male and female, being killed, scores injured, and over seven hundred made prisoners. The wide space in front of the semi-circular colonnade of the church, which is situated in the middle of the chief street of the city, would require thousands of people to fill it. In this square "the Cossacks with their heavy whips uplifted, the gendarmes with drawn swords, the police who unexpectedly poured out from all adjacent streets and courtyards, encircled the populace—students, merchants, children, officers, women, workmen—and impetuously drove them towards the Cathedral. A cry of horror resounded; people fell down, got up, and flew to the church; then they turned, and tried to make a stand in self-defence, and flung snow-balls, snow-shoes, sticks, etc. . . . The crowd, pressed by the Cossacks, tried to find shelter in the church; but the assailants followed on their heels, and General Kleygels ordered the doors to be closed. The massacre was continued in the Cathedral. But there the people found some furniture, heavy candlesticks, banners, etc." Another eye-witness says: "The sacred building resounded with the cries of people being trampled under foot. A bitter struggle began between students and police; candlesticks were overthrown, and the holy pictures damaged amid the horrible cries of wounded and trodden men. . . . A hand-to-hand fight was going on on the church steps. Two regiments of Cossacks were there, slashing at the crowd with their short whips. Luckily, I was borne right out into the street, where at all points crowds of police were to be seen. The balconies and windows of the houses were full of people. . . . Struggles were visible at all points; the crowd seemed nothing but a fighting mass of shouting, struggling soldiers, police, students, and general public." According to a statement

signed by forty-five representative literary men, some of whom were eye-witnesses of these events—a protest which was officially answered by the suppression of the "Writers' Union"—the "slaughter of defenceless people was carried out in such a systematic and organized manner that there can be no mistake about its having been premeditated. . . . Beaten and utterly exhausted women, who gave themselves up voluntarily to the police, were arrested, and on the spot subjected to further ill-treatment. Those who fell were beaten until they were dead or senseless." "These," the writers continue, "are not reports originating from unknown sources. Some of us who joined in begging for mercy for the innocent people were either arrested or beaten." One of the wounded was the statistician and economist, Annensky; two of those arrested were well-known authors—P. von Struve and T. Baranovsky. Lieutenant-General Viazemsky, formerly head of the Imperial Domains Department, sent a protest to the Tsar. Professor Milukov and other well-known public men addressed a petition, and General Dragomirov sent a memorandum to the Tsar against the measure of penal conscription, which was one of the chief causes of the trouble; and, in fact, this form of punishment was soon abandoned.

Nor was the capital only affected. In Moscow and Kharkov especially there were occurrences of a similar character, though without the infliction of such grave injuries. In Moscow, for the first time in Russian history, real street barricades were raised against the police and Cossacks, the students and mill-hands making common cause. The prisons were filled with "political" offenders, and the routine of the higher educational establishments throughout the country was so disastrously interrupted that special measures of accommodation had to be concerted by the Minister

of Education. On March 23 and April 1, two students, named Proskuryakov and Perovsky, who had been drafted into regiments, committed suicide; and, at the same time, two friends of the former, an officer named Kutnev and Miss Smirnova, took their own lives. On March 9, Piratov, one of the students forced into the ranks, was shot in Kiëv for having struck an officer in reply to insulting language; and, a few days later, another Kiëv student, named Podgoretsky, suffered the same fate. These events, immediately a result of the operation of the "Temporary Rules" of July, 1899, had a much wider significance for a society that had again reached the point of exasperation. Everywhere there were signs of a new temper abroad, a new courage and decisiveness in the protest against the doings of the oligarchy. In the old days the peasants had generally stood aloof from the struggle for liberty, suspecting any movement of the class from which the hated *tchinovniks* are recruited, and to which the landlords are allied, the men who had slain the "Tsar-Liberator." Much the same feelings of distrust affected, though in a smaller degree, the factory workers, who, indeed, could then scarcely be regarded as a separate class, most of them still holding their plots of land, and moving to and fro between town and country. But fifteen years had worked a great transformation. The myth of a paternal Tsar, prevented from giving the people what they needed by the officials and the landlords, has slowly faded away before the evidence of facts in the last two reigns. In the students' demonstrations of 1901, thousands of workmen joined, for the first time. The peasants saw that it was now the students, gathered to commemorate the Liberation in one of the national Cathedrals, who were beaten and otherwise maltreated. At the same time every section of educated society, the

leaders of the *zemstvos* and municipalities, professional men, authors, journalists, Academicians, and even some of the nobility, joined with a new boldness in the demand for guarantees of public and personal security. The excommunication of Tolstoy, and the old man's plain reply to the Holy Synod, made him one of the heroes of the day. From Kiëv a telegram with a thousand signatures was sent, congratulating him on his recovery from illness; hundreds of people wrote asking to be excommunicated along with him. Never before in Russian history had the opposition assumed such great dimensions, so broad a representative character, or so active and independent a spirit.

The old reply was given. Wholesale arrests of workmen and students were made in the great towns. Practically the whole staff of the two progressive monthlies, *Zhizn* ("Life") and *Mir Bozhy* ("God's World"), and several professors, including the historian Myakotin and the anatomist Leshaft, were imprisoned. The censorship of the daily press became sterner; ex-professor Tugan-Baranovsky, and the well-known writer, Peter Struve (who has since established at Stuttgart the powerful constitutionalist review, *Osvoboydenye*), were "administratively" exiled. At Nijni, Maxim Gorky and fourteen persons on the staff of the local paper, *Listok*, were taken into custody. The state of siege was extended over half the population of European Russia. During the spring of 1902, serious disturbances took place in the provinces of Poltava, Kharkov, and Saratov, the famishing peasants plundering many large estates. This led to a very panic of coercion. Batches of villagers were first flogged and afterwards imprisoned; the chief terrorist, Prince Obolensky, Governor of Kharkov (now Governor-General of Finland), was decorated and thanked by the

Tsar, who himself delivered a threatening oration to a humble deputation of elders; and a heavy charge by way of indemnity was imposed on the localities concerned.

It is impossible to follow in further detail the course of the ever-widening struggle. Two main results were soon apparent. The first was a revival of terrorism of which I shall speak in the following chapters; the second a vast expansion of the spirit of revolt, especially among the workmen and intellectuals. This is dimly reflected in a report of M. Muraviev, Minister of Justice, to the Council of State, on January 28, 1904, containing some important statistics and proposing some small modifications in procedure in political trials for embodiment in the new Penal Code.

The existing defects in this procedure, said the Minister, "are felt at present with the more force because of the considerable recrudescence in recent years of the socialist-revolutionary propaganda. The number of political crimes has increased in an extraordinary manner. It must be pointed out especially that the authorization (introduced by the law of May 19, 1871, as a provisional measure) to deal in certain cases with political offences by administrative order instead of referring them to the courts, as required by the judicial statutes of 1864, has, in fact, become the general rule with very rare exceptions.

"A striking picture of this state of things is presented by the following statistics gathered from the archives of the Ministry of Justice and relating to political crimes in the years 1894–1903:—

Years.	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
1. Political cases registered by the Ministry of Justice . . .	158	259	309	289	257	338	384	520	1053	1988
2. Persons prosecuted .	919	944	1668	427	1144	1884	1580	1784	3744	5590
3. Cases authorized by personal order of the Tsar	56	90	67	122	149	166	144	250	347	1522
4. Persons prosecuted in these . . .	559	623	561	1474	1004	1325	1363	1238	1678	6405
5. Political Inquiries by Military Tribunals .	3	2	3	4	1	2	4	1	5	10
6. Persons prosecuted in these . . .	3	2	4	11	1	4	10	3	5	45
7. Cases interrupted or annulled . . .	61	175	180	180	108	156	119	197	364	791
8. Persons prosecuted in annulled cases . .	120	407	335	499	135	82	162	310	303	429
Sentences—										
Foreigners expelled .	5	6	1	11	2	11	1	9	10	31
Deported to Siberia. .	21	42	53	117	47	49	49	38	115	910
Deported to non-Siberian districts . . .	34	66	42	79	119	105	85	51	77	592
Subjected to police surveillance . . .	244	219	218	767	340	308	618	486	193	1268
Imprisoned . . .	156	104	105	148	162	108	57	203	362	332
Placed in Houses of Detention. . . .	29	20	16	92	88	195	102	141	217	845

"It will be seen from these details, firstly, that the number of political cases has increased during the last ten years in an enormous proportion, and, secondly, that all these cases, with very few exceptions, have been dealt with by administrative order. It may be pointed out that during the period 1894–1901 no political case was referred to the courts in accordance with the rule anticipated by our code of criminal procedure. It is only in 1902 that there have been referred to mixed tribunals three cases, and in 1903 twelve. As to the cases referred under exceptional laws to military tribunals the number is insignificant and does not exceed from three to five per annum. It will be remarked also that the number of prosecutions ordained by his Imperial Majesty, which was only 56 in 1894, has augmented in 1903 to 1533, that is to say, had increased 27 times."

While admitting the departure from normal law here shown, M. Muraviev did not propose any substantial reform of the system.

A better representative of this new generation of the revolutionary movement could not be found than Dr. David Soskice, the brilliant young barrister and economist who succeeded Mr. Felix Volkhovsky about a year ago as editor of *Free Russia*. Mr. Soskice is a doctor of law, a man of wide culture and fine spirit, as unlike the conventional conspirator as possible; and it is characteristic that, after several years' acquaintance, it was only by direct inquiry that I received from him information of the experiences which I now print for the first time in his own words.

"The earliest impression I recall of the struggle between the Government and its victims," he said, in reply to my questions, "was when, as a schoolboy of the second standard in the gymnasium in Kiëv, I heard of three young students being hanged, and two more a little later,* for no other reason than that they had been caught distributing socialist literature—pamphlets that would be considered quite innocent in England. That was in 1880. I remember that when I was only fourteen years old I considered myself a Socialist—or a Revolutionist, which is the same thing; and before I was fifteen I witnessed the anti-Jewish *pogrom* of 1881 in Kiëv, and that deepened the tendency. In the following years I often hid revolutionists who were trying to escape, and took part in the meetings of secret circles, helped to organize secret libraries and funds, and to get into effective contact with the workmen. Those were the last days of the Narodnaya

* Three "politicals" were hanged in Kiëv in 1879: Bilchansky, Gorsky, and Gobst; and two in 1880, for circulating a revolutionary proclamation—Losinsky, a soldier; and Rosovsky, a student nineteen years of age.

Volya; the movement was in a state of transition, and our circle worked out its own programme. Between 1883 and 1885 I was constantly watched by spies as well as by the overseers of the gymnasium, and my rooms were repeatedly searched. In 1884 I was arrested for the first time, but soon released. I then entered the University of Kiëv as a law student, and took part in the students' agitation of 1884, when Delyanov, the Minister of Education, was attacked with stones. The University was closed, and I and others were expelled. Six months later I was permitted to enter the University again; and I continued to take part in the revolutionary movement. In 1885 there were further students' troubles; and in order to escape another expulsion I moved to St. Petersburg, and entered the University there. In November of 1886 there was a great political demonstration in the capital, in the form of a tribute to the memory of our great critic Dobrolubov; and a peaceful crowd was surrounded by Cossacks and kept standing for hours in the frosty streets, while about forty persons were arrested. I was exiled, among others, to Kazan; and here again I joined the revolutionary movement. Permission to enter the University was refused me, and at the end of the winter I was ordered to leave the city. On passing through Kiëv for the South, I was again arrested, along with my mother; but, after a careful search and investigation, was released again. We now settled in Ludzk under police supervision, with the obligation, that is, of reporting whither I was going on leaving any town. This soon became intolerable, and we moved again, giving our destination as Kazan, but really going to Odessa. Here I at once asked permission to enter for my final examination; and in three months, nothing having yet transpired against me, I had passed the final

law examination with honours and taken the doctor-of-laws degree.

"During this time I took an energetic part in the labour propaganda and in meetings of students' and other circles. I left Odessa in the spring of 1889 for Moscow, there to be called to the bar. A week after, when I had taken apartments and was about to be called, the *okhrana otdelenye* * summoned me to give an account of myself. They announced that three years before I had been forbidden to live in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw, or in the three provinces of the same names. When I said I had never been told of such a sentence, they replied that there had been no need to inform me, but that now I must leave at once. A special *pristav* (police-sergeant) was instructed to see me away from Moscow, and he told me in confidence that the police had been greatly upset by my disappearance from Ludzk, and had telegraphed hither and thither to discover my whereabouts. I now returned to Kazan, and, the local police not yet having information about me, was duly called to the bar. All available time I gave to the work of organizing an independent party among the workmen, students, elementary school teachers, military officers, and the younger clergy in the Ecclesiastical Academy. In a single year the organization progressed marvellously, and enlisted several hundreds of energetic members. I did not myself believe in terrorism at all, but the tradition of terrorist action was very strong, and therefore it was included in our programme, subject, however, to strict conditions and limitations. In a few months my physical strength gave way. I had to plead many

* This special force is an autocracy in itself, superior both to the gendarmerie and the ordinary police. The notorious Zubatov was afterwards its head.

cases in the courts as a barrister, to write articles in two papers to whose staff I belonged, and to attend at night meetings of numerous secret circles at which I had to speak or lecture. All this I had to do under the constant risk of arrest; not only was I regularly watched by spies, and my articles disfigured by the censor, but one day in court the judge was warned by the local colonel of gendarmes that I was the centre of a nest of revolutionists.

"In May, 1890, I became physically exhausted and fell ill with inflammation of the lungs. I then left Kazan for Kiëv, hoping for a cure amid the peace of the neighbouring pine woods. After five weeks of rest, a detachment of gendarmes descended upon my villa at night, and, after a thorough search of the place, took me to the city, and locked me up in an underground dungeon in the police-station. The cell was about nine feet long by four or five broad; the air was stifling, and a tiny grated window just under the ceiling and on a level with the ground admitted only a feeble light. Here I was kept for three days and nights, no charge being preferred; and then I was taken away under guard of two gendarmes to St. Petersburg. The railway journey occupied three days and nights, and during a stoppage of a few hours in Moscow I was placed in a cold damp cell in the Taganka prison. In the capital I first spent six weeks of comparative comfort and contentment in the 'House of Preventive Detention,' working hard at philosophy books from the excellent library. Still no specific charge was lodged against me, and I knew of no reason for my imprisonment.

"One night the guard suddenly came into my cell and ordered me to collect my things and accompany him to the office. My heart leaped; so, I thought, it is liberty at last! In the office I found an amiable colonel

of gendarmes and the governor of the prison. I asked whether I was to be released, but could only get an evasive answer. For three hours I was kept in the office; and then, it being near midnight, I was placed in a closed carriage with the colonel by my side, two gendarmes on the opposite seat, and another beside the driver.

"I still did not guess where we were going, till at last, while crossing the Neva Bridge in the direction of the gloomy fortress, the colonel suddenly exclaimed, 'Now do you know?' 'Where?' I asked. 'To the Petropavlovsk fortress.' 'Has the Government decided to murder me, then?' I broke out in uncontrollable anger. But the colonel only replied complacently that the Devil is not as black as he is painted.

"I will not attempt to recall the gloomy forebodings that passed through my mind as I thought of the victims who had preceded me to this horrible place—from the Princess Tarakanova, who was entombed here by the Empress Catherine, and was drowned in her cell during an inundation, down to Netchayev, who was chained to the wall, and the propagandists of twenty years earlier. After passing through rows of military men and down long dark corridors, I stood at last in presence of Col. Lyestnik, the commandant. He conducted me to a large and extremely cold and damp cell in the Trubetskoy ravelin—perhaps the very cell in which Maxim Gorky was confined a few months ago—and I was at once ordered to undress and subjected to a search which made my blood boil. Surrounded by guards, there was of course no possibility of resistance. An old torn linen shirt and trousers, white cotton socks, a kind of thin gown, and a pair of yellow felt slippers were given me. On my protesting, I received a new shirt, and then I was taken to another large but malodorous

cell, the distempered walls of which were marked with damp spots. Here I passed a full year.

"Generally, the conditions of imprisonment in the fortress are still as they were described by Kropotkin. Every day I had a few minutes' walk in the courtyard, and once a month a short steam bath. Perhaps the supply of books is better than of old, and I was allowed to buy books passed by the censor. But the torture of close solitary confinement, aggravated by thought of the possibilities of a *régime* both inhuman and illegal, remains. The guards are absolutely mute, communicating only by signs, and as they too wear soft slippers, not even a footfall breaks the dead silence; so that at length one's hearing becomes so sensitive that—do not think I am exaggerating—the flickering of the little night-lamp sometimes startled me like the firing of guns. You, happy man, would never think of the little things that count in this underground existence. One of the tasks of the guard who sits outside the door of your cell all night is to go through the prison books searching for marks made by prisoners attempting to communicate with each other. They are not always successful in finding them; but they are often successful in keeping their unhappy neighbour inside the cell awake for hours by the flick-flick of the turning pages. And the struggle to preserve one's health and sanity! Though I danced every day for an hour or two, after two or three months I began to suffer from scurvy.

"During this year I was taken twice to the Okhrana Otdelenye for examination, and was shown photographs of persons I knew, but whose acquaintance I of course disowned. Still no charge was preferred against me. At the end of the year my own clothes were suddenly returned to me, and I was taken back in charge of the same colonel of gendarmes to the House of Preliminary

Detention. I was now informed that the preliminary inquiry was finished, and that I should be detained here till my case passed through the stage of judicial inquiry. In this prison, accordingly, I was kept for another year. Then, the judicial inquiry being stated to be concluded, I was transferred to the 'Cross' hard labour prison, a paper being read to me, the effect of which was that the political criminal, David Wolfov Soskice, barrister and doctor of law (*candidat prav*), was condemned by order of the Tsar to one year's imprisonment, with three years' subsequent exile under police surveillance. So I spent a third year in durance vile, the last three months of it in the prison hospital, without being put upon trial, and without even having a definite charge preferred against me.

"After the completion of the term, I was sent by *marshoult* (special warrant) to the town of Berdichev, in the province of Kiëv. My mother soon joined me, and I thought to live quietly, continuing the work of my profession. I was, however, forbidden, by special order of the Minister of the Interior, to plead in the courts, or to teach children, or to open a shop, or to sell spirits, or to preach or lecture, or act on the stage. The last straw came after three months, in the summer of 1893, when I was only just beginning to regain my strength, in the shape of a midnight visit of a body of *gendarmes*, headed by the colonel and a *procuror*, with a warrant for my arrest if anything suspicious were found. I understood, indeed, that they would arrest me in any case if they did not believe me hopelessly ill. From their examination I learned that a student of the University of Kazan and another at Moscow had confessed to having attended secret meetings, at which I had spoken, four years before. At last, then, there was matter for a definite charge against me!

"Happily, some jealousy had arisen between the police of the two towns; and, while they were awaiting instructions, I seized the opportunity of the respite, and made my escape over the Austrian frontier."

I permit myself to add one more to the foregoing biographical outlines.

Asked how he became a revolutionist, Mr. Mark Broido, the story of whose exile has been told in an earlier chapter, replied: "I go back to the time when, a boy of sixteen, I was studying in the *gymnasium* in a town of the province of Kovno. Two of our ten teachers were advanced Liberals—in every town you will find such men—and one of these used to invite the elder pupils to his home, and talk over social subjects with them, while the other lent us books that were not allowed in the college library. One day I came across a smuggled copy of Stepniak's 'Underground Russia.' If that book moved you sober Englishmen, judge how it would affect us, surrounded still by the great evils and injustices which that brave spirit combated. I became a conscious revolutionist, though not yet a Socialist. The influence of the Russian classics—Gogol, Turgeniev, Tolstoy—deepened and broadened my feeling of the need of greater liberty. I should say that Sir Thomas More's 'Utopia' was the first Socialist book I read—this in a German translation. A year later we formed a group of six or seven elder students to meet periodically for the discussion of social and political subjects. At that time the Labour Movement, as we now know it, was only beginning; but we were deeply interested in it, and proved this by getting some of the labourers to come to us for such simple lessons and readings as we could give and they understand. There was in the town a certain doctor who had suffered two years' solitary confinement in the St. Petersburg fortress

for 'subversive tendencies,' and then been exiled hither; and he was a centre of progressive thought in the narrow compass allowed to him. For my last classes I moved to the larger town of Libau, where there were more revolutionists and Socialists, with whom I became acquainted. Here I met a friend who, himself a working man, poor and dependent on his own labour, had become a student, and with him and his *fiancée*, who had taken some part in the labour movement in Vilna, I was afterwards to be associated in an effort which cost us all our liberty. Trades Unionism is considerably developed in these Baltic provinces, and partly because of the influence of maritime industry, partly under the stimulus of Jewish and Polish national feeling, it there reaches its highest organization.

"I now removed to St. Petersburg and entered the Technological Institute, but kept up frequent communication with my friends in Vilna and Libau. The revolutionary party had not yet become nationally organized, but there were many town committees. In the main the movement was still an economic one; but some of us thought the time had come to give it a political programme also. I decided, with this aim, to establish a new organization for the supply of pamphlets and other propagandist material, and resolved to found a secret printing-office. What place should we choose? In the large cities there is the danger of perpetual police vigilance; in the small towns and villages that of the curiosity and suspicion of ignorant neighbours. We decided to try between these extremes, and ultimately took three rooms in Vilna, which we opened as a bookbinder's shop under the name of one of the comrades employed. Our preparations took nine months, my wife and I collecting funds in St. Petersburg, mainly by means of students' entertainments, and our two

friends at Vilna, with two labourers, one a bookbinder and one a compositor, gradually establishing themselves, with the necessary printing machinery, in the room behind the shop. Some wealthy men in Russian society are always ready to help such an enterprise, but it proved perilous help in our case. A certain G., a progressive editor in the capital to whom I was introduced by P. Struve, contributed £10 to my fund; but I found out afterwards that he was practically a police spy in the camp of the 'intellectuals.' From some of the students' friendly societies I also received help, and several journalists promised me literary contributions.

"But the most difficult and risky thing to organize was the circulation of our literature when it was printed. This had to be carried out by agents provided with money to send consignments to various parts of the Empire, even to Siberia. In Vilna we did not circulate our papers at all, at least until after they had appeared in other places; thus we were amused one day by a report that our printing-office had been discovered—in a suburb of St. Petersburg. For a short time we worked hard, making connections among the growing and active Socialist Labour groups, and in the factories and workshops of the capital. And then, early in 1901, we were discovered in reality.

"The printery had only been open for six months, and had issued only some seven or eight thousand copies of half a dozen pamphlets. You may like to know the character of this literature which our Government so hates and fears. One pamphlet was a manifesto stating our aims; a second was a translation of two speeches of Herr Liebknecht on the Russo-Chinese War; a third a speech of Mr. Keir Hardie on the South African War; another a narrative of the French Revolution of 1848; another a summary of the Russian

Code, with a motto from Pushkin—'In Russia you have no law; you have only a pillar and on the top of it a crown.' The sixth was a new edition of Korolenko's novelette, 'A Wonderful Creature.' We were planning a newspaper, to have much the same programme as *Iskra* (*The Spark:* the organ of the Russian Social Democratic party) which had not yet appeared; and I had gathered a number of contributions, and arranged for correspondents in different places, when we were arrested.

"A crowd of gendarmes and dvorniks (*concierges*) broke into my rooms in the dead of night, and, while I sat on my bed, set about a systematic search, cutting open the wall-paper, and raking about in the stove and up the chimney. It is characteristic of the mental condition of the typical gendarme officer that when they found five volumes in German, consisting of histories of the French Revolution of '48 and the Paris Commune, and some of Marx's works, with portraits, they had to ask me what they were, and left the books, quite satisfied with my explanation that they were a part of an illustrated history of the world.

"However, they did not leave me. I was first taken to the Preliminary Detention prison, where I remained, without any hint of a charge being lodged, for three months. My first examination then took place, and I was told that I was arrested for taking part in a dangerous organization, and for gathering money and literary contributions. On the same night, it appeared, twelve persons only slightly acquainted with us, including a publisher whose wife had lent me books, had been arrested; these were detained for five months and then released. Four or five further examinations took place at intervals. Some of us who had established communications in the prison by

knocking,* decided to protest against this punishment without trial by a hunger-strike, and we maintained our refusal of food and drink for five days. Some were released; some, including myself, sent to Siberia, still untried, and our sentences still undelivered. It was not till the beginning of 1904, when I was already in the far distant sub-Arctic province of Yakutsk, that I was apprised of my punishment—eight years of exile to the remotest part of Siberia."

As a postscript to his own story, Mr. Broido has furnished me with the following summary details of eleven men of his own exile party with whom he was most closely acquainted, and I print them here as evidence that I have not relied upon exceptional cases, as an indication also that the revolutionists of to-day are no less resolute than their predecessors.

1. *Moses Lurie*, 32, compositor. He had been tried as a "political" seven times. Arrested for the first time in 1891, in Warsaw, for adherence to the Labour Party of Poland; the second time in 1893, in Kharkov, for smuggling revolutionary literature over the frontier; the third time, in Ekaterinoslav, for propaganda amongst the working-men; the fourth, fifth, and sixth times, in 1896, 1897, and 1898, in Kiëv and Moscow respectively. The last time he was arrested in 1901, charged with adherence to the Socialist organization, "The Labour Standard" (*Robochaya Znamia*), and with having been acquainted with Karpovitch, the assassin of the Minister of Education, Bogolyepov. Was for twenty-five months in solitary confinement in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. Sentence for the last accusation—five years of exile in Kolymsk, in the far north-east of Yakutsk. He took part in two "hunger-strikes" and in the

* I need not here repeat the explanation of the method of communications by a code of knocks which has been given by Kennan and Kropotkin.

protest of prisoners in the prison of Alexandrovsk, near Irkutsk. While on his way to Kolymsk he stopped in the town of Yakutsk, and was the first to join the ranks of the protestants whose siege has been described.

2. *Victor Kurnatovsky*, 35, a nobleman, military surgeon, and engineer, graduate of the University of Zürich. Arrested for the first time in 1889, in Moscow, and sent for three years into exile in the province of Archangel; the second time in 1897, at the frontier station of Verzbolo, for smuggling illegal pamphlets. Sentenced to three years' exile in Eastern Siberia, wherefrom he made his escape. In 1901 he was arrested for the third time, in Tiflis, charged with having delivered a revolutionary speech at a meeting of workmen; twenty-nine months in prison and four years' exile in Eastern Siberia. He was living in a native village about 120 miles from Yakutsk, when Broido became acquainted with him.

3. *Nicholas Kudrin*, 29, engineer. Arrested for the first time in 1899, charged with having organized a secret printing-office in the Ural; sentenced to five years' exile in Siberia, but escaped. The second time he was arrested in 1903, in Kamenez-Podolsk, for smuggling revolutionary pamphlets over the frontier—eight months in prison and a sentence of eight years' exile to Nijni-Kolymsk on the Arctic coast of North-East Siberia.

4. *Vladimir Perasitch*, 36, a Servian, undergraduate of the Universities of Kharkov and Vienna. Arrested for the first time in 1889, in Kharkov, as a Socialist propagandist; three years in prison. The second time, arrested in 1898, in Moscow, as a member of several socialist labour organizations; sentence—two years of solitary confinement, five years' exile. The first time he was arrested under a false name—Solodutha, which he

confessed to the officials after he had become involved in the affair of Yakutsk.

5. *Leo Tessler*, 32, a chemist, graduate of the University of Zürich, arrested in 1899, in Kiëv, for adherence to the Socialist Party; twenty-six months in St. Peter and St. Paul fortress, and then eight years' exile in Kolymsk.

6. *Paul Teplov*, 36, a journalist, arrested in 1900, charged with editorship of a Socialist periodical, *The Labourer's Cause.*

7. *Olga Vicker*, 28, a lady-teacher, arrested the first time in Byelostock, in 1898, as a member of the "Labour Standard;" the second time in Odessa, in 1901. When her husband, a student at Kiëv, was exiled for five years into Siberia, she followed him voluntarily. Together with all her comrades in the Yakutsk siege, she was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour, but made her escape on the way to the hard-labour prison, and is now in Switzerland.

8. *Vladimir Bodnyevsky*, 29, artillery officer; arrested, in 1903, for revolutionary propaganda amongst the troops; sentence—ten years' Nijni-Kolymsk. He was one of the chiefs in the protest of Yakutsk, being a man of military experience (he took part in the Russian-Chinese war) and of great bravery. On the way to the hard-labour prison he made an attempt to escape, but in vain. Then he blew out his brains.

9. *Alexander Israelson*, 39, graduate of the Academy of Art in Brussels, a painter. Arrested in 1902, in Moscow, charged with acquaintance with suspicious persons. Eight months in prison and three years in exile.

10. *Leo Nikiforov*, 31, a literary man and veterinary surgeon. Arrested the first time in Moscow in 1899, the second time also in Moscow in 1901, for "free

conversations"; five months in prison and three years' exile in Siberia. His father, an old man, a well-known writer who had translated the works of Ruskin into Russian, was arrested some months ago. His brother, while in prison of Moscow, poured oil upon his bed, set light to it, and was burned to death.

11. *S. Komay*, a member of the Social Democratic Labour organization, arrested in Vilna as compositor in a secret printing-office. After fourteen months' solitary confinement in the St. Petersburg fortress, and eight months in the Nicholas Mental Hospital, he was sent for eight years' exile to Kolymsk, where he poisoned himself. The photographic group, which I have reproduced, was taken in Yakutsk before his departure for the exile's Furthest North.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RISE OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The sudden upheaval of the labouring classes in the Russian capital last winter was a surprise and even a mystery to the average Englishman. He had supposed that almost the whole population of Russia was engaged in agriculture, that machine industry was only in its infancy, and, moreover, that the poor masses of the Tsar's Empire were so far sunk in ignorance and apathy, not to say drunkenness and other degradation, that an effective revolt was impossible. This misunderstanding was, in the main, due to the fact that our daily and weekly Press had given us hardly any enlightenment as to the deep and sweeping developments that had been in progress during the reign of Nicholas II. Manufactures and mining are still, it is true, of only secondary importance in Russia, but they have grown very rapidly, and, as we have seen, now give occupation to about two and a half millions of the population (three-quarters of a million of these being textile hands, and nearly as many miners and metal workers), which may be taken to be nearly ten per cent. of the adult male workers of the country. Moreover, the power of this new industrial class is enormously increased by its concentration in towns. In thirty years the town populations of the Empire have grown from eight and a half to seventeen or eighteen millions; the inhabitants of St. Petersburg and Moscow have increased threefold; those

of towns like Lodz, Ekaterinoslav, Baku, Warsaw, Odessa, and Rostov still more considerably. With the growth of numbers there has been a no less striking growth of intelligence, consciousness of the evil state of the country, and capacity for common action.

The early stages of the movement are thus described in one of the volumes of foreign reports edited by Mr. Geoffrey Drage for the Royal Commission on Labour, and issued in 1894 :—*

"The crisis of over-production which followed the war of 1877–78 resulted in a reduction of wages which varied from 10 to 20 per cent. In 1884 many employers, instead of reducing the number of their workmen, brought about an indirect reduction of wages by means of decreasing the number of days worked in the week. This action, which caused a loss of one or two days' wages in the week and was contrary to the terms of labour contracts, roused great indignation in many factories, and the general dissatisfaction was increased by the prevalent abuses of fines and the obligation to deal at the factory stores, where prices were often as much as 45 per cent. above the ordinary retail prices. In consequence of these various abuses, a number of disturbances arose in 1884–85, especially in the governments of Vladimir and Moscow. To prevent the recurrence of similar disorders the law of July 3rd, 1886, was promulgated, which charged the factory inspectors with the duty of regulating the relations between employers and employed, and established severe penalties for strikes or other violation of the labour contract. By virtue of this law employers who infringe the stipulated agreement with their workmen are punished by a fine of 50 to 300 roubles. If they have caused a breach of the peace they are liable to imprisonment for not more than three months, and until June, 1893, the law provided that they might be prohibited from ever again carrying on any

* C. 7063—XIV. of 1894. Prize 7½d. This blue book is still a most useful and comprehensive statement of Russian economic conditions, though many of the statistics are out of date, and the details of the historic passages are not always accurate. Consult also chapters on Industrial Legislation and Workers in Industry in "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century."

business. By the law of June, 1893, however, this prohibition was reduced to two years. On the other hand, workmen who refuse work before their labour contract has expired are liable to not more than one month's imprisonment. In the case of a strike or cessation of work with the object of obtaining an advance in wages or other improved conditions, the leaders of the movement are liable to from four to eight months', and their accomplices to from two to four months', imprisonment. Those who resume work at once when required to do so by the police are exempt from all penalties. If the men on strike force others to come out, prevent them from resuming work, or attack the property of the factory or any person employed there, the ring-leaders and their accomplices are sentenced to imprisonment for a term which varies respectively from four to eight and from eight to twelve months. Any workman who causes a disturbance can be 'administratively' dismissed by the local authorities without a trial. If an employer finds it necessary to reduce the rate of wages or to dismiss a large number of his workmen, he sends private information beforehand to the Governor and the factory inspector, who endeavour to find employment for the discharged workmen. Before the institution of the factory inspectors the police intervened between employers and employed, and it is stated that their decisions were almost always given in favour of the employers. At the present time whenever a strike occurs the factory inspector ascertains the difficulty, and generally succeeds in bringing the strike to a close. Appeals against his decisions may be laid before the provincial committees on factory affairs, and finally before the Ministry of Finance. In most cases it appears to be the employers who dispute the inspectors' awards."

The first great and really organized strike took place in 1885 at the Morosov factory at Orehovo-Zuevo, being led by two revolutionists, Volkov and Mossoyenko. The men were driven to "riot" by the arrest of their representatives, some of whom, after being acquitted by juries, were re-arrested and exiled to Siberia by administrative order. This strike was, however, an isolated occurrence. A connection between the more

intelligent workmen and the older revolutionary organizations had always been maintained, but the lapse of the latter toward the end of the eighties marked the recognition that a new need and a new opportunity had arisen. Had the foundation and expansion of modern industry in the empire been natural and healthy in character, had it depended on genuine organizing ability attracted by an open market amid social and political freedom, the new movement would have followed the lines of trades unionism in the West; but, as we have seen, there was no public freedom, and the structure of industry and trade was artificial and unsound from top to bottom. M. Witte's policy of ultra-protectionism and paternal stimulation led straight, by way of over-speculation, to a crisis the effects of which were aggravated by the successive famines of the last decade and the campaign of reaction under M. Plehve. Unemployment of the Western type was a new phenomenon in Russia. The dismissed workman suddenly found himself in the same case with the outlawed student or "intellectual," the hunted Dissenter, the persecuted Jew; especially when famine brought in a swarm of hungry competitors, he began to ask himself why, alone in Europe, the Russian peasant is always near starvation. Mr. Drage quotes from a Russian economist an international comparison which may be thus summarized—

	Massachusetts.	England.	Moscow.
WAGES (roubles per month)—			
Cotton-spinning and Weaving:	53	41	13
Machine Construction: ...	66	44	23
Average hours of labour: ...	255	234	284

According to an official writer,* the agricultural labourer in Russia hired by the year earns on the average 60 roubles (£6) per annum in the governments

* "Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century," p. 597, *et seq.*

of the "black earth" zone, and 64 roubles elsewhere, with board and lodging, the price rising as we move from the centre of the country westward, and falling in the East. Board is reckoned to cost 45 roubles per annum. A day labourer's hire varies from 40 to 60 kopecks (say, 10*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.*). Miners' wages cover a wide range, with an average of from 150 to 200 roubles (£15 10*s.* to £21) a year. In the mills of Moscow and Vladimir, the average monthly wages are stated to be: for adult men from 14 to 15 roubles (30*s.*); for adult women 10 roubles; for youths 6½ to 7½ roubles; and for children 4 to 5 roubles. At Lodz and Warsaw, however, these figures rise by 50 per cent. These figures will serve to show how far behind those of Western Europe are Russian industrial conditions. The labourer's position is, moreover, much worse than that of the workman in England before the abolition of the Corn Laws, the legalization of trade unions, and the extension of the franchise, in that he has no personal rights, no power of directing his social and political destinies. In minds so prepared, how powerful would be the appeal of the stories of the early revolutionary movement, misnamed "Nihilism," and of every new sacrifice for liberty!

In 1895 the "Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Classes" was organized in St. Petersburg by a group of Social Democrats recruited in part from the fragments of the old revolutionary bodies. Although it did not aim immediately at large membership, which would only have provoked a premature struggle with the authorities, it soon had an income of £2000 a year, thanks in part to middle-class support, and branches were formed in half a dozen chief provincial towns. The great textile strike in St. Petersburg in the summer of 1896, when 35,000 men and

women from twenty-nine mills went out in support of their demand for better wages and shorter hours, gave the Union its first opportunity. The discipline and power of this effort were recognized not only by the punishments inflicted (1050 persons were arrested, of whom some were imprisoned and others rusticated), but also by a direct promise of legislation by the Government, a promise only carried out, however, after a second strike in January, 1897, in which 18,000 men from eight factories took part. The law of June 2 of that year reduced the normal working day to 11½ hours and night work to 10 hours, and forbade work on Sundays and seventeen public holidays. But, as the official reporter says, "these rules are not absolute. Labour may take place during a larger number of hours, and on Sundays and holidays, but then it is not obligatory." "The success of these and other strikes," says Mr. Volkhovsky, "and the development of the labour movement have been to a great extent due to the active part which the independent and daring portion of Russia's educated society—mostly young socialists—have taken in it. These people—undergraduates of both sexes, young lawyers, doctors, civil and technical engineers, journalists, even some factory inspectors, and other officials—did all that work for the working-men which the operatives were not accustomed to do. They formulated the working-men's demands on paper; typed or printed them clandestinely, with much risk to themselves; secretly published manifestoes on general questions of interest; supplied the strikers with literature; collected money for them; sent abroad communications about the course of events; and tried to consolidate and make permanent that organization which was originally only temporarily improvised for the necessities of individual strikes. Thus the Working-

Class Emancipation Leagues of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiëv were formed. Other places followed, and the movement spread all over Russia, strike after strike following in the most distant points of the Empire. In May, 1898, several groups of permanently organized working-men, together with Socialists belonging to other classes, federated, and thus formed the Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Russian Empire. This federation does not, however, include all the forces of the Russian labour movement. There are other groups, such as those that call themselves Revolutionary Socialists, and the one represented by the periodical—*The Workers' Mind.*"

The demand for labour literature had now grown to very considerable dimensions, and to supply this increasing demand has, in the intervening years, engaged a large part of the energies, not only of the Social Democratic Party (in which the Emancipation Union was absorbed in 1899), the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party (of which I shall speak in a later chapter), the Jewish "Bund," or General Labour Union, and their provincial groups and committees, but also of the colonies of Russian political refugees in London, Paris, and Geneva. Every strike became an example and a lesson in propaganda and organization—an example and lesson soon spread throughout the great towns through the secret press. At the Paris Labour and Socialist Congress in September, 1900, Russia was represented by seventy-two delegates, who, though mostly refugees, held twenty-three mandates from organizations within the Empire. The report presented by one group gave particulars of 217 strikes, about a half of which had involved no less than 236,020 men. The most frequent demands were naturally for shorter hours and better wages, and in the greater number of

cases some success was scored. Since the St. Petersburg strike of 1896, this group—the Social Democratic Union —had maintained a secret Labour Press, partly by clandestine printing, and partly by smuggling over the frontier, and had circulated thousands of fly-sheets and May Day manifestoes, and about thirty larger publications, a modest enough record, but not unpromising as a commencement. Their report accounted for 5492 persons arrested for taking part in strikes and Labour demonstrations in five years; and this was thought to be more than a half of the real number. It was calculated that, reckoning only "preliminary detention" before any form of trial had taken place, these 5000 victims had suffered a total of 700 years of imprisonment. About the same time, the committee of the "General Workers' Union of Russia and Poland" reported that, beside two periodicals which had been published steadily within the Empire, it had circulated 25,800 fly-sheets in Yiddish and 3300 in Polish, in eighteen months.

While, in all this propaganda, specific labour conditions were naturally prominent, political liberty and civil rights, as against the arbitrary power of the Administration, were increasingly insisted upon. The Russian Social Democratic Party, born amid the disappointment of the collapse of the earlier revolutionary organizations, had at first deliberately limited itself to an industrial and economic programme; and for years much of the strength of the leaders of the new labour movement was frittered away in bickering between sections of those who did, and those who did not, see the need of political action. The rift is not yet wholly covered, but the rapid march of events has either converted or pushed aside the doctrinaires; and there is a strong tendency to common action, if not to actual union, of the revolutionary forces, and a general recognition that

some substantial measure of political freedom must be won before any radical economic reforms can be obtained.

Face to face with this widespread and threatening development, the Government, beside plain repression, tried for a moment an expedient so puerile that the story of it would not be credited in this country were it not confirmed beyond all question. "Though I have long been interested in the working-men," said Father Gapon, the hero of the St. Petersburg strike, to an English correspondent in St. Petersburg, "I was dissatisfied with their Socialist dark-chamber organizations. I first tried to organize a colony for the unemployed, and wrote a memorandum on the subject, which I submitted to the Empress, receiving high praise for my ideas. But the matter advanced no further, and I received no permission. Then came Zubatov. I knew he and his agents were organizing the working-men merely to deceive them, to find out who were their leaders, and to imprison and exile them. Nevertheless I determined to follow his example"—in all but its aim and end, that is to say.

The story of this Zubatov shows that the Russian Government can beat the wildest scribbler of Nihilist novels in the conception of impossible subterranean intrigue. After being a student at the Moscow University, he became an official spy in the mid-'eighties, entered the service of the secret police, and in ten years rose to the head of its Moscow office, receiving a handsome salary and a sum of £6000 a year for secret service money. When the Labour agitation began to assume large dimensions, and it became evident that neither the whips of the Cossacks nor imprisonment and exile would extinguish it, Zubatov, with the consent of his chiefs, the Grand Duke

Sergius, and the then prefect, General Trepov, invented a new policy, which, however, was but a police elaboration of the paternalism of M. Witte. This was simply the organization of trade unions on an official and "patriotic" basis, with due security of police control, the aim being to "dish the Radicals," and from the inside of the Labour movement to keep an eye on its "dangerous" leaders. In 1901 audiences ranging up to a thousand workmen were gathered in Moscow, at what was called the Zubatov "University." But the movement proper showed no signs of succumbing either to cajolery or to coercion. May Day, 1902, was celebrated in St. Petersburg by the killing of twenty demonstrators and the arrest of 800 others. In the labour troubles at Zlato-ust, in the Urals, there was a horrible battue, in which thirty men were killed and 250 wounded. Every trial advertised the demand for freedom, and the spirit of revolt waxed rapidly. In 1903, when Odessa and other southern towns were shaken by the agitation, Zubatov's agents went a step further, and actually undertook the leadership of the strike organization. This soon got out of hand, however; the policy, now thoroughly discredited, was abandoned, and Zubatov himself dismissed.

It appears to have been under pretence of following this silly example that Father Gapon persuaded the late M. Plehve to permit him to commence a "legal" Labour organization in St. Petersburg, in the spring of 1904. It was, perhaps, the most foolish thing, from his own point of view, that Plehve ever did. But how could the great police master suspect a simple priest of country stock of subversive tendencies? Since Father Gapon became famous, some enterprising Italian has discovered in him the grandson of a Napoleonic officer, who stayed in Russia as a farmer after the retreat of

the French armies. However this may be, his father was a peasant in the province of Poltava, and it was only the boy's exceptional talent and force of character that procured him admission to the local Theological Seminary. After the death of his wife, he determined to continue his studies in the ecclesiastical academy of the capital; and here, as an active worker in a society for the spread of Christian teaching among the industrial classes, and as an almoner of the House of Preliminary Detention, he came to know intimately the miserable life of the factory and workshop hands, and of the political and other prisoners. How his Workmen's Union developed, under the stimulus of popular discontent caused by the war and the suffering it entailed, we shall presently see.

But it was only when Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky succeeded De Plehve at the Ministry of the Interior, and gave Russian society a strange and unexpected moment of freedom of speech and movement, that the next step could be taken. Not Gapon, but Sazonov, is the immediate cause of the great awakening.

PART III

THE AWAKENING

CHAPTER XX

THE END OF PLEHVE

RUSSIA, in the midsummer of 1904, showed no outward signs of an impending crisis; and I left Moscow and Warsaw feeling that my friends had been imagining a vain thing. I was quickly undeceived, as many another globe-trotter has been on the same ground. On July 17, Bobrikov, Governor-General of Finland, was shot by Eugene Schaumann; on July 17, the Vice-Governor of Elisabethpol, Transcaucasia, was killed; and on July 28, Vyatcheslav Plehve, Minister of the Interior, fell before the bomb of Egor Sazonoff, appointed agent of the Organization of Combat of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. This time the orthodox land of mystery and horror should, indeed, have "staggered humanity;" but, with almost indecent promptness and unanimity, the outer world declared that these things were just what might have been expected. It was a bad day's business for the Tsardom when the correspondent of a powerful daily paper was turned out of St. Petersburg.

At home, the death of Plehve was seen to have a much graver significance, to mean, in fact, nothing less than the removal of the real Autocrat and the crippling of the Governmental machinery. For more than a quarter of a century he had stood at the storm-centre of Russian life, and had held up with unflinching

determination the standard of reaction. Where he got his coercionist ideals and the *sang froid* with which he carried them out no one could say, for his origin was obscure and mixed, in regard to both blood and intellectual equipment. Like his great rival, de Witte, he was a self-made man; it is one of the odd features of the bureaucratic system that the man without a past, if he be able and unscrupulous enough, often goes further and faster in the Imperial service than any scion of the blue-blooded aristocracy. Plehve never turned back on his own record. From beginning to end, he was an enemy of liberty and progress in every form; and he knew no scruples in combating tendencies which he believed to be subversive of the despotic power he managed gradually to concentrate in his own hands.

The Nationalists of Poland first felt the weight of his more than Bismarckian hardness. While yet a young man, he became the leading agent in suppressing and punishing the revolutionary movement which culminated in the assassination of Alexander II. The father of the present Tsar gave him practically unlimited power; all the great cities of the Empire were placed under martial law; night searches, wholesale arrests on suspicion, exemplary penalties by secret courts, became the order of the day. The prisons were filled by "administrative order." Siberian exile became a by-word. To Plehve, the cold-blooded, the opinion of the outer world mattered not one whit. Let English Radicals, if it pleased them, waste their time in finding the exiles a platform. Let the democrats of New York assemble in mass meeting, and forward futile petitions to the Tsar! Plehve, all deference outwardly to the autocratic traditions, well knew that the Tsar, like his father, was a tool in the hands of the omnipotent *tchin*, and that he, Plehve, had a firm hold upon the handle of

that ancient and extraordinary machine. The subject nationalities, the subject religions, the leading spirits in the local governing bodies whose power he had already reduced to a harmless minimum, in turn felt the penalties, I will not say of independence, but of existence.

Backed with the full strength of Mother Church, incarnate in that other sinister figure, Pobyedonostsev, the head of the Holy Synod, Plehve pursued his way with absolute fearlessness over the bodies of his victims. At last he was revealed not simply as an anti-Semite, but as a direct instigator of riots in which hundreds of Jews were killed and wounded, and thousands were made homeless. In the same spirit he had already directed the abrogation of the Constitution of Finland. In the same spirit he instigated the labour riots in Odessa and other southern towns. And as he had fearlessly stepped into the shoes of his murdered predecessor at the Home Office, M. Sipiagin, so the assassination of his servant Bobrikov left him determined to pursue to the end his relentless policy.

If it was to a small body of outlaws that he owed his death, the number of the victims who rejoiced over the news was large, and by Western standards respectable enough. First among them were the Finns, for it was M. Plehve, who became Secretary of State for Finland after he had completed the suppression of the so-called Nihilist movement, they had to thank for the gradual abolition of the historic autonomy of their country. When a deputation bearing a petition against this arbitrary work, with half a million signatures, came to St. Petersburg, M. Plehve refused to see it, and ordered the delegates to return quickly. New deportations, the appointment of Prince Obolensky—Obolensky the Flogger, as he has been called, in

memory of the way he suppressed the agrarian disturbances in Kharkov three years ago—and the terms of the Imperial Manifesto on that occasion, proved that M. Plehve still ruled the Tsar and that the end of General Bobrikov had taught him nothing. Only a few days before his death, a Finnish writer, Mr. Konni Zilliacus, had addressed to the Minister an open letter, which was a plain warning: "Who sows wind, reaps the tempest. You have sown widely, a near future will see the harvest. With you lies the responsibility, with you the malediction of the people driven to despair. On your head be the blood that will be shed. It is you who have opened the eyes of us Finlanders to the necessity of the future revolution which will put an end to this shame for humanity that is called the Russian Tsardom. That is the only service your policy has rendered to progress, and it is so great that all of us who are struggling for liberty offer you our thanks."

Plehve's activities had, in fact, an astonishingly wide range. He was only fifty-six years of age, yet—as Public Prosecutor, head of the police, Secretary of the Council of the Empire, and Minister of the Interior, successively—he made "order reign in Warsaw;" dispersed the revolutionists of the late seventies and early eighties among the prisons of European and Asiatic Russia; "Russified" the Baltic provinces; spread terror and ruin among Jews and other heretics; crippled the zemstvos; provoked labour disturbances, in which many lives were lost, in Odessa, Baku, Kiëv, and other towns; flouted M. Witte and his allies, and entered into the fruit of their labours, such as it was; put the universities under a humiliating military tutelage; almost openly provoked the Jewish massacres in Kishiniev, and Homel; suppressed the *jacquerie* in the provinces of Poltava and Kharkov; and, finally, robbed

the Armenian Church of property of an estimated value of eleven millions sterling. Throughout this unparalleled career, he maintained his influence with the throne, and defied all opposition. The fate of Bogoliepov, Sipiagin, Bogdanovitch, Bobrikov, and the Vice-Governor of Elizabethpol, the attempts on his own life and on Pobyedonostsev, Obolensky, General Trepov, General Wahl, Baron Korv, Prince Galitzin, and a score of lesser officials, left him unafraid and relentless. The only hope he bequeathed to his country lay in the fact that there was no man of the same ability, will-power, and single-mindedness left to continue his policy.

His old enemy, M. Witte, remained in the field, though not in possession of it. But, so far as the rivalry went, it proved the superior power of the dead man, in the given circumstances. M. Witte, when all criticisms have been uttered, is a great administrator, with an ambition equal to that of Cecil Rhodes, and an executive capacity almost comparable with that of Lord Cromer. Mischievous as it has been in many ways to the body of the nation, his establishment of the spirit monopoly, his nationalization and extension of the railway system, his substitution of a gold for a paper currency, his development of the State banks, and his use of the Protectionist tariff to serve the purposes of landed proprietors and the great capitalists in the metal and mineral trades, were colossal designs, the fruit of which fell into the hands of M. de Plehve. Witte had some partial liberal proclivities; and if his career proves anything, it proves the folly of imagining that even a small spice of liberalism can be reconciled with the service of the Tsar. The profits of M. de Witte's finance, the power which his enlargement of the Civil Service gave to the supreme Minister for the time being, were used

consistently by M. de Plehve for the repression of free movement, free commerce, free thought and discussion in every form. The dead Minister gave abundant evidence during his life that he had full Imperial support for his least scrupulous and most cruel undertakings; and the appointment of M. Buligin to his post, after a brief trial of Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky, showed that, in the mind of Nicholas II., his influence survived the shock of his death.

This was, nevertheless, a serious blow to the credit of the immense army of *gendarmérie* and police of which he was the generalissimo. From the first it was known that the assassination was no accidental or independent event, but a deliberate act in the struggle, which had again reached an acute stage in course of the last three years, between the heads of the autocratic Government and the organized revolutionary parties. This was not the first attack on the late Home Secretary, but he learned how to protect himself in the crisis of twenty years ago, and had enjoyed a long immunity. A Russian friend explained to me that M. Plehve never moved about without a large bodyguard of police in private clothes. A friend of my friend was looking into the window of a photographer in St. Petersburg, where there was some special display, when he felt himself mysteriously pressed upon, his face scrutinized, his outer pockets felt, by several neighbours. Before he could speak, he had caught the explanation. M. Plehve was also an interested observer of the photographs, and these pushful persons were his spies. I am told that he spent as much as £100,000 a year in securing the safety of his own person, but this is probably an exaggeration. The facts shown in a recent report of his own on police expenditure are that, whereas up to 1896 £90,000 a year was found enough for secret

purposes, "the development of societies hostile to the Government, and the restlessness of the students, artisans, and peasantry," had since necessitated a rapid increase of these resources. In 1903 the return showed £143,000 spent at home, and £18,000 in secret police abroad; but, in addition to this, the cost of the general police department and the *gendarmérie* rose to £46,000; and the whole account showed a deficit of £120,000. "In former years," said M. Plehve, "strict economy was observed in combating the revolutionary movement, as it was hoped that it would be possible to suppress the anti-Governmental movement without any considerable monetary sacrifice. This economy, however, has enabled the revolutionary movement to organize an imposing force, which the Ministry now has to take into account." The end of the great policeman was not immediately due to any "imposing force;" it simply proved the futility of coercion, whether the coerced be few or many. If they be few, the reply is assassination; if many, insurrection. In this case the single blow against the single man who incarnated the spirit of repression was a signal for a great awakening of the popular forces throughout the Empire.

Suddenly deprived of its right arm, the oligarchy was surprised into a liberal act. Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky was appointed to the vacant post, and for a moment the lid was lifted from the seething cauldron of the national life. The Press enjoyed a new liberty, and used it to expand and enforce the chorus of hopeful protestation. When a number of exiled zemstvo leaders, writers, and lawyers were allowed to return, when the Free Economic Society was reopened, and some of the more vexatious Press restrictions were removed, it seemed as though a new era had already dawned. The excited expectation that had spread like a fever throughout the land could

now only be satisfied by substantial reforms. The historic meeting, or rather series of meetings, of delegates from the leading *zemstvos* held in St. Petersburg on November 19–22, 1904, was the most important representative gathering ever held in modern Russia, consisting of over a hundred substantial men, Conservatives many of them, men of wealth and position, with not a single irresponsible element or characteristic. Never was universal discontent more respectably and soberly voiced. And this body of men, without whom the routine business of the country could hardly now be carried on, found at once that it was too late for measures of procrastination. They traced the manifold evils which every Russian experiences in every day of his public life to their seat in the arbitrariness of the Government; and they demanded, not only freedom of speech, worship, press, and meeting, not only personal liberty, and the removal of all arbitrary police measures, but, as a means of permanently securing these rights, the establishment of an Imperial Douma, or Assembly, consisting of two Houses, the one of delegates of the *zemstvos*, and the other elected somewhat in the manner of the American Senate, with power of legislation and control over administration and finance. Among the signatories of the resolutions in which these demands were formulated were members of many old aristocratic families, including Prince P. Dolgorukov, Prince Lvov, Count P. Heiden, Prince N. Volkonsky, Prince M. Galitzin, Prince Tchaikovsky, Baron K. Bondberg, Baron A. Stuart, and Prince S. Barataiev. Although not permitted to be openly printed, the resolutions were at once circulated and discussed throughout Russian society. In many great towns they were endorsed enthusiastically at meetings of legal, literary, educational, and other bodies. Many of

these associations, especially those of barristers, journalists, economists, and literary men, made formal demands for the removal of existing disabilities.

The oligarchy was now recovering from the blow of five months before, and Sviatopolk-Mirsky's term was nearing its close. On December 15 the Moscow Town Council adopted resolutions in favour of freedom of the Press and meeting, and popular control over the Government. Prince Galitzin, the City Captain, was formally reprimanded by the Governor-General for permitting this offensive manifestation. But the elders of the old capital, if not easily aroused, are not easily suppressed when they do rise. At the opening of the Moscow district *zemstvo* immediately afterward, Prince Troubetskoy took up the word of revolution, demanding, albeit in words of studied politeness, that the present deadly yoke should be removed from the shoulders of the people, not, if you please, by the constitution of committees of petty officials, but by the summoning of a popular legislative assembly, and the firm establishment of the personal rights which all other Western nations enjoy.* A few

* In a letter to Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky at the same time, Prince Troubetskoy, after having taken personal responsibility for the resolutions of the Moscow *zemstvo*, wrote as follows:—"Russia is at this moment traversing a period of anarchy and revolution. What is happening is not merely the manifestation of a youthful effervescence, but rather the logical outcome of the general situation in which society now finds itself. The present state of affairs is extremely dangerous for the whole nation, and particularly menacing for the sacred person of the Emperor. . . . I had lately the pleasure of presenting myself to the Emperor and reporting to him, as well as I could, the present situation of the country. I tried to make him understand that what is happening is not a simple riot, but a revolution, and what are the reasons that are pressing the Russian people to a revolution for which it has no desire. His Majesty has power of preventing things from going so far. But for that there is only one means: it is that the Emperor shall have confidence in the nation and in its representative bodies. From the bottom of my heart I am convinced that if the Emperor, animated by a perfect confidence, permitted these elements to associate themselves with him, Russia would be delivered from the menacing prospects of a bloody revolt,

days later the *zemstvo* adjourned indefinitely after adopting a resolution declaring that it was impossible to conduct the business of the assembly with the necessary quiet in view of the Government *communiqué* on the subject of its meetings.

The turning-point was reached at a council held in the Palace of Tsarskoe Selo on December 15 and the following days, when a battle royal between the more liberal functionaries represented by Sviatopolk-Mirsky, Witte, and Yermolov, and the reactionaries led by Pobyedonostsev and Muraviev, resulted in the triumph of the latter. The two manifestoes of December 26 and 27 were the immediate result of this situation. In his decree to the Senate, Nicholas II. protested his "untiring care for the needs of the country," his "undeviating heart's desire" for religious toleration (what were Tolstoy and the people of Kishiniev to think of that?); and he formally promised "a series of great internal changes." But within a few hours his Ministers were warning the leaders of the provincial councils and municipal assemblies, which are the only trace of representative government in the Empire, that they had gone beyond their rights in discussing these same "needs of the country," that if they did so again they would be punished, and that hopes of "a radical change" in the government of the country were "chimerical." The duplicity of these two proclamations clearly showed the folly of hopes based on the supposed benevolence of the monarch, but they were also a

and would give all its support to its Emperor, his autocracy, and his will. In view of the state of mind of all those who are watching with alarm the prospect to which I have pointed, it is no longer in human power to forbid and prevent them from expressing what is weighing on their hearts. When the country is in danger it is not a time to be silent. Even if I am declared culpable for speaking thus as President of the Assembly of the zemstvo, my conscience is calm and pure."

witness to the growing strength of the Opposition. Certain very insufficient reforms were vaguely adumbrated; the only means by which those and other reforms could be carried out were refused in language of insolent menace. Certain committees of petty officials were to be set to study how to ameliorate rural conditions. The great institutions charged with responsibility for those conditions were, at the same moment, warned that they must not meet together for their consideration, and that if they continued to state inconvenient facts aloud they would be visited with unnamed penalties.

Who were the men thus threatened? Were they hot-headed students, or labour agitators, or heretics, or desperate peasants? Not at all! They were the great Moderate party of the nobility in the country, and the business classes in the towns. The discontent of workmen and *mujiks* and nonconformists is a very old phenomenon, one of increasing seriousness, it is true, since the war produced its disastrous effects, but not yet, in and by itself, immediately dangerous to the throne and the governing class. The *zemstvo* movement, as we may call it, if not quite new, had assumed proportions strikingly in contrast with the isolated manifestations of former years, had indeed swept from one end of the country to the other like a sudden fire, and had made possible a revolution which no one would have anticipated a few short months before. To suppose that such a development could be met by Imperial lectures on the danger of "introducing discord" and creating "excitement" by raising "inadmissible demands" and "chimerical hopes," and similar conduct which "must be and will be stopped," was a very foolish blunder. Matters had gone too far for the constitutional agitation to be disposed of either by force or by

false pretences. It had now, for the first time, the leadership of a large and influential class of moderate reformers; and the events of the next few weeks were to prove with terrible force that it had behind it the dumb rage of millions of desperate peasants, and the organized discontent of hundreds of thousands of town workmen.

CHAPTER XXI

"BLOODY SUNDAY": A BROKEN IDOL

"IT is hardly possible," wrote a Russian correspondent, "to picture a gloomier New Year's Eve than the one which we are keeping here. Commerce and industry are at a complete standstill. There is no work, and the number of unemployed is appalling. Workmen, having nothing to eat, are trying to steal food. The Stock Exchange is quite deserted. Every one is longing for the end of the war." Gloomy enough, indeed! But worse times were to follow. The long-suppressed discontent was now to find startling expression. A trifling incident precipitated the crisis. Upon the dismissal of a couple of men from the Putilov Ironworks in St. Petersburg on January 16, on the ground that they belonged to a Union, the workers at once struck, demanding an eight hours' day, a minimum wage, and a permanent committee of arbitration, as well as the recall of their fellow-workmen and the dismissal of an objectionable foreman. Immediately their action was copied by the men of the Neva Shipbuilding Yards—a most serious matter in respect of certain submarines and gunboats which should have been ready within two months, and of urgently needed war material in preparation there—and by others in the Admiralty Works, and a number of other factories and mills. Father Gapon, whose

Working-men's Association now numbered over 60,000 members engaged in all the chief industries, and included eleven central organizations, suddenly became a public personage, the acknowledged leader of the strike. He interviewed the directors of the Putilov works, and also the Prefect of the Police; and, claiming the confidence and adherence of the working-men, gave due notice to the authorities that the strike would spread unless concessions were promptly granted. Their answer was an absolute refusal; and there was no disguise about the co-operation of the police and the employers.

Day by day the strike spread; more and more operatives left their work; from every quarter came news of closed factories. The movement began to assume a more determined, organized, and political character. Meetings were held throughout the city, and it is reported by one who was present that he had not heard greater freedom of speech, even in America. The demands of the strikers were formally extended to include the minima of reform. That some of the largest works which were the first to close their doors were owned by the Government or engaged on Government contracts was no mere coincidence; it was rather evidence that general, not alone industrial, disabilities and sufferings lay at the root of the movement, and that the rapid development of the strikers' demands in the former direction was of natural, not artificial, growth. The prohibition of the publication of any news of the strike without express permission of the police was irreconcilable with the benevolent promises of the two-weeks-old Imperial *ukaz;* but it did not need this consideration to elicit in favour of the strikers the moral support of men in all sections of society.

At this juncture occurred an incident to which, whether due to design or to accident—and the punishment

since meted out to the officers and men responsible leaves this still in doubt—an unfortunate influence upon the actions of the Tsar during the following days may be fairly attributed. At the annual ceremony of the blessing of the waters of the Neva, a bullet fired from the guns of the fortress on the opposite side of the river broke through a window in the Nicholas Hall of the Winter Palace, and several more fell near the pavilion below, where the Emperor and the Court were assembled. No great damage was done, and the incident was not officially regarded as an attempt upon the life of the Tsar; nevertheless, in spite of the explanation that a filled cartridge had accidentally been left in one of the guns which fired the salute, a dread of disaffection in the army and of the consequent danger for his own life must have haunted the Tsar's mind. Meanwhile, the general discontent was increased by the refusal of the Ministers of Finance and the Interior to receive a deputation of working-men. No less than 174 factories were now closed in the capital, and nearly 100,000 men and women had left work; bands of strikers paraded the streets daily, visiting factories and workshops which were still open and forcing the *employés* to join them. In some cases the masters themselves closed their works, fearing the consequences of such visits. But although the men occasionally came into conflict with the police who had been put in to guard Government works, the authorities —whether because they were taken by surprise, or because they hoped to retain public support, or under the deliberate intention of allowing the movement to ripen in order that its extinction should be the more complete—did not as yet interfere with the strikers. The streets were in darkness save where soldiers had been sent to guard the electric light works; many shops were closed; the official *Police Journal* and a meagre

number of the *Official Messenger* were at last the only newspapers published. Nor was the capital alone affected; risings and strikes now began to occur in Moscow, Kharkov, Riga, and other towns, while at Lodz a number of people were killed by the police, who fired upon a crowd of demonstrators.

Such was the situation when Father Gapon conceived his fateful idea of a deputation *en masse* to the Emperor to present him in person with a petition * on behalf of the workmen and those dependent on them. The significant features of this lengthy document are the bold, if sentimental, expression of the spirit of revolt which now dominated the labouring population of the capital, and the practical demand for a single fundamental political reform, the summoning of a Constituent Assembly. "We are poor, persecuted, and burdened with labour beyond our strength," it began. "We are insulted and treated not as men, but as slaves, who ought to bear their cruel fate in silence. We are deprived of our rights, are uneducated and stifled by despotism and injustice. We have arrived at the extreme limits of our endurance." After reference to the demand for an eight hours' day and other industrial measures, to the imprisonment of innocent workers, and the responsibility of the bureaucracy for "a shameful war," the petition called upon the Tsar to throw down the wall which divided him from his people. "National representation is indispensable, for the people alone know their own real needs. Let all be equal and free in the right of election. Direct, therefore, that the elections for the Constituent Assembly be made by general secret ballot. That is our chief demand. Everything is contained therein." And after a recapitulation of the

* For the full text of this and other documents here referred to, see *Free Russia* for February, 1905, and following months.

industrial demands, the paper closed thus: "If you do not reply to our prayer we will die in this square before your palace. Should our lives serve as the holocaust of suffering Russia we shall not regret this sacrifice, but will bear it willingly."

The project was received with acclamation by Gapon's people; and the police began to show signs of alarm. Gatherings and processions in the streets being forbidden, Father Gapon addressed a further letter to the Tsar on January 21, announcing that "the whole people, trusting in you, has resolved to appear at the Winter Palace at 2 p.m. to-morrow in order to inform you of its needs," adding: "if, vacillating, you do not appear, you tear the moral bonds between you and the people. I and the representatives of labour and my brave comrades guarantee the inviolability of your person." At the same time a letter signed by Gapon and eleven union representatives was sent to Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky, apprising him that "the workers, many thousands of people, have peacefully, with faith in him, but irrevocably, resolved to proceed to the Winter Palace." Finally, the leader interviewed the Minister of Justice, who formally noted the demands of the strikers, with the ambiguous comment that every one must do his duty and act according to his conviction. That day, the Metropolitan Antonius pronounced an anathema against Father Gapon for inciting the people to rebellion at a time of national trouble. From morning till night on Saturday, January 21, meetings were held at which the petition to the Tsar was read and explained to the people, and many thousands of signatures were affixed. There being rumours that the Government would resist the progress of Sunday's procession to the Winter Palace, a deputation of distinguished men—including Maxim Gorky, the novelist; Professor Kareyev, a scholar of

European reputation; Professor Myakotin, of the *Liberal Review*; Mr. Anensky; Mr. Peshekonov, a well-known writer on economic subjects; Mr. Arseniev, and Mr. Hessen, editor of the journal *Pravo*—went to call upon Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky in order to endeavour to prevent bloodshed; but the Minister declined to see them. They were received by the Assistant Minister, Rydzevsky, who coldly informed them that the Government would not alter its arrangements. The delegation then called upon M. de Witte, who said that he was no longer in a position to help them. The eve of what was to be known as "Bloody Sunday" and the whole night were spent by the leaders of the movement in preparations for the morrow. Father Gapon, lest he should be arrested, remained absent from the poor lodging which was his home. "Me," he said, "they shall not arrest, because effective measures have been taken against any such surprise. I have my bodyguard of workmen, and I shall not sleep at home any more."

On the 22nd of January, the clear frosty morning dawned upon the "Little Father" of all the Russias fifteen miles away from St. Petersburg, hidden in his palace at Tsarskoe Selo. But, in the capital, all thoughts were of his presence at the Winter Palace, where his children had craved that he would meet them. The bridges connecting the industrial quarters with the centre of the city were early occupied by troops, and the avenues which led to them were shut off. Small camps of grey-coated soldiers and even of sailors were stationed short distances apart throughout the snow-covered streets, with bonfires, stacks of rifles, and ambulance vans in readiness. By midday the church bells called in vain; roofs and windows were crowded with spectators; slowly but steadily, the populace was moving on from all

sides towards the Palace Square. But already trouble had begun: the crowds who were trying to pass from Basil Island across the bridges to the meeting-place on the other side of the Neva came into collision with the soldiers. The Cossacks attacked them with their whips and the Uhlans charged to drive them back. Still they pressed on. "We are peaceful men," they said. "Let us pass. We have only come to seek for help." The answer was a volley from the guns; and in that moment many a brave fellow had uttered his last word.

Past the Narva Gate came a long bare-headed procession led by Father Gapon and another priest, in full vestments, bearing the cross. Some of the strikers carried banners, ikons, and portraits of the Tsar, Tsaritza, and the Dowager-Empress. No fear, no thought, of opposition or danger troubled the workmen as they moved along, for they knew that a notice calling upon the men to march quietly to meet the Tsar had been read by the police and allowed to remain posted on the factory walls, side by side with an address of thanks which had been presented to the Emperor six months before; moreover, a police-officer, in consultation with the chairman of the Working-men's Club, had said that the conduct of the procession would be best left to the men themselves. As they passed, the soldiers, bowing and uncovering their heads, made the sign of the cross. Suddenly, a squadron of cavalry intercepted the procession; and, with no warning, the infantry from the opposite bank of the canal fired upon the crowd, first, a volley of blank cartridges, and then with ball. On all sides men fell wounded and dead; the ikons and banners were riddled with shot; the snow was stained with blood. The holy portrait of the Tsar was shattered and torn to shreds, while Father Gapon rose from beneath it, slightly injured, and disappeared, not to be seen

again till he can stand at the head of a more effective army of protestants.

On all sides the dead and dying were carried away or cast carelessly aside. At the Putilov Works the men, fearing that they would be fired upon, flung themselves upon the ground, and so the soldiers shot them down; the awful scene was described as a "human shambles." Outside the Palace the troops fired directly into the crowd. Men, women, and children fell at each volley. The soldiers had become uncontrollable and were firing with reckless aim, so that even little children playing upon the ice were struck. Several officers were attacked and injured by the crowd; but it was unarmed, and had no means of resisting the terrible onslaught. In the Vassili Ostrov district and on the Nevsky Prospect the strikers tried to erect barricades with the telegraph-wires and poles and stones which they tore up from the roadway, but the soldiers fired upon them mercilessly and cleared them away. As the day wore to a close, the city was again plunged in darkness. Firing was heard all through the evening, and throughout the night there was a great funeral, the police secretly carrying away and burying the dead. The number of these will never be known, but a conservative writer, anxious to prove that "complete tranquillity" had been restored, estimated that five hundred persons were killed and fifteen hundred wounded. In the evening the following proclamation was issued:—

"Comrades, Russian Working Men.—There is no Tsar. Between him and the Russian nation torrents of blood have flowed to-day. It is high time for the Russian workman to begin without him to carry on the struggle for national freedom. You have my blessing

for that fight. To-morrow I will be among you. To-day I am busy working for the cause.

"(Signed) GEORGE GAPON, Priest."

Comment upon these events is needless. If Nicholas II. preferred to stay at Tsarskoe Selo, rather than meet a test which a courageous monarch would have welcomed, we can only reflect that this was quite in accordance with the spirit of his reign. But the Tsar being absent, why should the workmen have been prevented from going to the Winter Palace Square to discover the fact? There were troops enough to protect the State buildings, and, at least, the onus of the first violence would then have rested with the strikers, had any disturbances occurred. Instead, cavalry and infantry occupied every approach to the centre of the city, and, without any unnecessary formalities, proceeded to carry out what looked like a carefully prearranged programme of massacre of unarmed men, women, and children. As though Russia had not a sufficiently redoubtable enemy to face in the Far East, her rulers must needs turn their weapons upon the people of her metropolis. The future keeps her secrets, but we may be sure that in one way or another there will be a price to pay for every one of these wasted lives.

Having suitably disposed of the petitioning workmen, the oligarchy proceeded to clap into jail the "intellectuals" who had endeavoured peacefully and legally to mediate for them. During the night of January 23–4, Mr. Hessen, who introduced the deputation of the previous Saturday to M. Witte, was arrested and thrown into the St. Petersburg fortress, whither he was followed by Professor Karayev, Mr. Peshekonov, Professor Myakotin; Mr. Semevsky, the historian; Mr. Kedrin,

a member of the City Council—all these members of the deputation which had waited on Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky and M. Witte, in the hope of preventing bloodshed—Mr. Ivanchin Pissarev, an author, and Mr. Sifitnikov, a member of the St. Petersburg Judicial Committee. "Not one of these men," wrote Dr. Dillon, "would have anything to do with secret committees or subterranean agitation, and it was they who, in my presence, refused to listen to a suggestion that a permanent committee be formed to direct the revolutionary movement." Dr. Dillon was himself arrested, but was liberated in half an hour. The immunity of the foreign correspondents was one of the singular features of the crisis. On January 24, General Trepov was installed as Prefect of the city, and on the same day Maxim Gorky, who had taken a prominent part in the agitation for peace and representative government and in the deputation of the 21st, was arrested in Riga and brought to St. Petersburg, where he lay in the fortress—in conditions which have been described in earlier chapters—till February 27, being then released on bail and deported to Riga.

Of the no less terrible occurrences in the provinces during the succeeding months it is too soon to speak with accuracy or certainty of true perspective. The strikes in Moscow, which immediately followed that in the capital, showed no very considerable strength or staying power, but it was otherwise in some of the Southern and Baltic coast towns, and above all in Poland. Warsaw, Lodz, and other Polish towns were for several weeks in a condition of open anarchy, during which street fighting was of daily occurrence, and scenes of bloodshed unparalleled in modern European history were enacted. No sooner did this movement show signs of temporary subsidence than the attention of the world

was drawn to sanguinary outbreaks in the Caucasus and the Caspian oil region; and these, again, were eclipsed by the news of alarming depredations of peasants in Saratov, Minsk, Pskov, Tchernigov, Orel, Kursk, and several districts of Poland and the Caucasus—perhaps the most threatening development of all. In all these episodes there were signs of an increasing political spirit, a growing organization, and, not infrequently, a paralyzing effect upon the local administration.

Chaos in the Government offices hardly less complete than the chaos in the chief industrial centres of the country was only thinly concealed by the sterile proceedings of rival "reform" commissions, and repeated *canards* about the coming concession of a "Magna Charta" through the heroic efforts of M. Witte and M. Yermolov. Scepticism as to all such reports was justified by the terms in which the Tsar addressed two deputations of well-trained workmen at the beginning of February, and by the appointment of M. Buligin as Minister of the Interior at the same time; and it was afterwards confirmed by the dissolution of the Commission to which the drafting of industrial "reforms" had been entrusted, and the obstinate continuance of the Manchurian campaign in the teeth of petitions and protests from every unofficial section of the nation. The official Moderates have, then, proved themselves powerless against the infatuated reactionaries who control the Court and the Governmental machine. This is not surprising. Earnestness counts for much in such a contest. M. Witte has hitherto always discouraged the demand for political reform, claiming that all will be well if he can only be allowed to pursue his financial and other economic plans—plans that in the past have inflicted upon the Empire some of its heaviest burdens. To an ambition like his no essay is

impossible, but it would have been in the last degree surprising if he had now been found fathering a really far-reaching scheme of political reform. The Opposition cannot but regard anything he does with just suspicion, and the only certain thing is that, if a Zemsky Sobor be summoned, and be not of a really representative character, with full power of legislation and control over the national finances, it will serve no other purpose than to advertise and stimulate the revolutionary parties in their more extensive demands.

CHAPTER XXII

TERRORISTS AND REFORMERS

I HAVE said that, apart from the separate national movements represented by the Polish Proletarian Party, the Polish National League, the Revolutionary Party of Little Russia, the Georgian Revolutionary Federalist Party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Finnish Party of Active Resistance, the more extreme Opposition in the Empire consists of three considerable organizations—the Social Democratic Party, the Jewish Bund, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Of these the work of the first two is almost exclusively concerned with the growth of the labour movement, some account of which has been given. It remains to speak of the Revolutionary Socialists, who have a wider and in some respects more characteristically Russian programme and method.

This party was founded at two secret Congresses—the first held in a town of South Russia in August, 1898, and the second at the end of 1900. It may be said to be a new combination, in accordance with the new circumstances, of the two elements, the combative and the agrarian, which were separated when the old Land and Liberty Society split up, thirty years ago, into the sections of the "People's Will" and the "Black Division" (or "the Land for the People"). The Social Democrats, from 1895 to the end of the century, were

in the main Marxian doctrinaires, whose practical work was limited to the organization of strikes, who decried political action, opposed "terrorism," and disbelieved altogether in the peasantry. To many groups scattered up and down the country, some of them being remnants of the old revolutionary parties, this narrow programme appeared to omit the greater part of the national problem; and it was these groups, aided by advice and literature from the elder refugees in Paris, London, and Geneva, that united to form the Revolutionary Socialist Party, which, while it works actively among the industrial classes of the great towns, also carries on, through a network of branches, an energetic propaganda in the villages.

If anything was to come of the revolutionary movement in the near future, this was an absolutely necessary undertaking, however much thankless labour and punishment it might involve. The peasantry are still the main body of the nation, and it is direct from their ranks that the army and the factory population are mainly recruited. To Marxian Socialism the Russian agrarian problem was *terra incognita.* But that problem involves the existence of the great mass of the Russian people. Some slight ameliorations of the lot of the factory workers have been secured. The *mujik* has got nothing since the Emancipation except a single *ukaz* loosening the collective obligation for the payment of taxes. His burden is often as heavy as the serf's was, in spite of revisions of direct taxation and reduction of the redemption dues. He is consequently unable to improve his methods of farming; the soil is becoming exhausted; the cutting down of forests has worked widespread mischief; and the natural consequences of the starvation of the schools and the *zemstvos* are bad crops and famine. It is easy in the se circumstances to aattck the

Mir and the system of communal landholding. But if the peasant is to a great extent tied to the soil by the double chain of undivided property and collective taxation, if excessive subdivision of land means subdivision of capital, stock, and tools, and all the other weaknesses of petty culture, the *Mir* yet gives a direct spur to personal effort; it provides the only available refuge, by mutual aid and care, of the old and otherwise helpless; and where the soil is not frequently reallotted the advantages of ownership are united with local government and joint responsibility. That common property in land has not crumbled away, and is not doing so, shows that the system has deep roots in native instinct and habit.

In pressing to a logical conclusion the principle of collective land ownership, the Revolutionary Socialist Party is, therefore, basing itself upon a major characteristic of Russian life and history. And it claims to find much encouragement in the present outlook for its propaganda. "Elementary instruction has penetrated among the peasants," says the Central Committee of the Party in a recent report, "and this, added to the experience which forty years of freedom has brought them, has changed country life enormously, and has made it much more possible for the dwellers in the country to assimilate revolutionary ideas. Twenty years ago it was useless to distribute pamphlets among a crowd, for there was no one who could read them. To-day, books find readers in the most out-of-the-way villages. Formerly it was not at all a rare occurrence to find a *mujik* who had never seen the town of the district in which he lived; now a great mass of the Russian peasantry leads a nomad life. Not less than ten million adult peasants roam about the country every year, taking on different kinds of work, meeting

numbers of people in different walks in life, observing a variety of phenomena, and being constantly struck by the contrast between the luxury of some and the misery of others, between the miracles worked every day by science, and the darkness of their own intellects. This wave of human misery, which every year throws millions of peasant workers over the surface of Russian soil, tossing them from one exploiter to the other, helps to open the eyes of the workers, and shows them the pyramid of which they form the base, and against the angles of which they are always striking. And all this torrent of impressions, of feelings, and of new knowledge, is constantly surging into the villages with those who are returning to the home of their birth, and forcibly, if slowly, enlarges the horizon of the *mujik* who has never yet left his field. At the same time the consciousness of their rights is growing in the minds of the peasants. The great hopes which the *mujik* used to place in his little father the Tsar have evaporated, thanks to the long and vain waiting they have cost him, and thanks also to the policy of Alexander III., who only attempted to protect the gentlemen proprietors. Revolutionary propaganda during these latter years has also helped the cause. In our oral propaganda, as also in our pamphlets and proclamations, we never miss calling attention to the necessity of the suppression of absolutism on one side and of the initiation of a whole series of economic and political reforms on the other. During 1903 and 1904 our propaganda gained ground daily, and its workers penetrated not only into the north and south, but also into the central provinces, which used to be the rampart of the Tsardom. We are positive that only the lack of effective forces—a large percentage of which fall victims of Governmental persecutions, for they are sent into prison and exile before

they have time to become experienced workers—and also the impossibility of starting and of maintaining everywhere our organizations, prevents us from grouping around us the masses of Russian peasantry. The sympathy they display for our ideas is so great, the confidence they place in the propagandists of these ideas is so manifest, that they constantly invite these latter to come among them, and themselves organize meetings so as to be able to talk and exchange ideas. During the four years of our work among the peasantry we have not once met with an intentional betrayal, nor a refusal to accept our literature with the view of distributing it amongst others."

At the same time, the Committees and groups of the Party in the large towns agitate for political emancipation by the establishment of a Constitution, as the necessary first stage toward a democratic State. In the last two years they have circulated an enormous quantity of secretly printed proclamations and other brochures, in addition to forty-six numbers of their official organ and eight volumes of other publications. From time to time their secret presses are discovered. There is a police raid; two or three men and women are swallowed up, but the work goes on steadily, notwithstanding the sacrifice of life and money. There has also been an enormous increase in the last year in the quantities of clandestine literature printed abroad and smuggled into the empire.

To the outer world the Party has become known by the smaller but more sensational part of its work, the arrangement of "reprisals" in reply to the grosser acts of administrative oppression and cruelty. I have said that a revival of terrorism has marked the acute stage of the anti-Governmental struggle in the last five years. A complete list of these acts of

vengeance would be lengthy; the more important are as follows:—

Killed

M. Bogolyepov, Minister of Education, by Karpovich, after the University troubles, February 27, 1901.

M. Sipyagin, Minister of the Interior, by Stephen V. Balmashev, son of an old political exile, April 15, 1902.

The Chief of Police at Vladikavkaz, in the Caucasus, September, 1902.

General Bogdanovitch, Governor of Ufa, after the massacre of strikers at Zlato-ust, May 19, 1903.

General Bobrikov, Governor-General of Finland, by Eugen Schaumann, June 17, 1904.

The Vice-Governor of Elizabetpol, Transcaucasia, July 17, 1904.

M. Plehve, Minister of the Interior, in St. Petersburg, by Egor Sazonov, assisted by Schimel Sigorsky, July 28, 1904.

Colonel Bykov, at Olty, province of Kars, after a massacre of Armenians by Cossacks, by an agent of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, September 13, 1904.

Chief of Police at Shusha, in the Caucasus, December 28, 1904.

M. Tcherbatov, Inspector of Customs, at the same place, January 2, 1905.

Prince Andronnikov, a cavalry officer, who had given orders to fire on the people in Warsaw, February 5, 1905.

Herr Johnsson, Procurator of the Finnish Senate, at Helsingfors, on February 6, 1905.

Grand Duke Sergius, in Moscow, February 17, 1905.

ATTEMPTS

M. Pobyedonostsev, Procurator of the Holy Synod, by N. Lagovsky, April, 1902.

Trepov, Chief of the Moscow Police, by a woman teacher named Allard, April, 1902.

General Vahl, Governor of Vilna, after the flogging of political prisoners, by Hirsch Leckert, May 18, 1902.

Prince Obolensky, Governor of Kharkov, after the flogging of peasants, by Th. Kachour, August 11, 1902.

M. Bessonov, Chief of Police at Kharkov, at the same time.

Prince Galitzin, Governor-General of the Caucasus, at Tiflis, after the repression of the Armenians and the confiscation of their Church funds, October 27, 1903.

M. Metlenko, Chief of Police at Grodno, November 12, 1903.

Baron Korv, Governor of Lumsha, January, 1904.

M. Maschevsky, Chief of Police at Ekaterinoslav, by a noble named Ivanitzky, January 5, 1905.

General Trepov, Chief of Police at Moscow (on the eve of his removal to St. Petersburg), January 15, 1905.

Baron Nolken, Chief of Police at Warsaw, March 26, 1905.

Several of the more important of these terrorist acts, including the assassination of M. Sipyagin, General Bogdanovitch, M. Plehve, and the Grand Duke Sergius, were admittedly carried out by emissaries of the "Boyevaya Organisatzia" ("Organization of Combat") of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. This body is necessarily small in numbers, for the danger of a large combatant body was found to its peril in the old days of the "Executive Committee;" and it is completely isolated and self-directing. To the

argument of the Social Democrats that terrorist action tends to isolate those who trust to it and to prevent the political organization and education of the masses, it replies that in face of such a policy as that of Plehve theoretic considerations and abstract arguments are vain; that to a Governmental terror there is no possible reply but an anti-Governmental terror; that such reprisals arrest attention where arguments arrest none, and give heart and hope where there is like to be only a barren despair. But the organization sees the deplorable character of isolated action by individuals thinking only of a personal vengeance; and it aims, therefore, to give the struggle the character of a regular civil warfare. Thus M. Plehve is attacked, not the Tsar, because M. Plehve was the more powerful and therefore the more guilty person. That it has no liking for murder in itself it proves by re-issuing the proclamation of the old Executive Committee condemning the murder of President Garfield, and declaring that "in a country where individual liberty makes an honest strife of ideas possible, where the free will of the people is engaged not only in the elaboration of laws but in the nomination of statesmen, a political assassination is the manifestation of the same spirit of despotism whose abolition in Russia is our immediate object."

"I wish to explain," wrote Sazonov, in a speech which he was not allowed to deliver at his trial, but which has since been published by his colleagues,* "that our party cannot be described as one which acts by 'violence.' It is by its very nature inimical to every kind of violence. . . . We are not forcing our ideals upon the people, we wish only to speak the truth. . . . We hate and despise violence; we are convinced that violence is powerless against ideals.

* *La Tribune Russe*, Nos. 26, 27, 28, 1905.

But all our attempts at peaceful activity have been met by ruthless persecution on the side of the Government. . . . We are subjected to the humiliation of corporal punishment, beaten by knouts, trodden upon by horses, and shot down as soon as we resolve to declare publicly in the streets that which we desire and request. We are deprived of the protection of law, and declared to be the enemies of the people, and political criminals." After enumerating the many crimes committed by von Plehve, for which he (Sazonov) "executed" him, he gives an autobiographical sketch, in order to show how, by the force of circumstances, he at last felt impelled to take upon himself the duty of avenging the people: "I had no personal motives for killing the Minister. By birth I am of a peaceful, religious, and monarchical peasant family. The rooms in the house of my father were ornamented with portraits of the Tsar side by side with holy ikons. Later on, in the gymnasium the educational spirit was of the same nature. When I entered the Moscow University I did not think or know of any revolution." The first shock to the student's political indifference was administered to him by the Governmental Order in 1901, punishing refractory students by enforced military service, contrary to existing laws. He felt obliged to take part in the students' protest against this Order, and then he noticed, for the first time, that the police and their spies were the masters of the University. He was put in prison with many other students, and it was there that he became acquainted with revolutionary prints. Then came the excommunication of Tolstoy, whom Sazonov greatly admired as a writer, and the news of the terrible ill-treatment of the students of St. Petersburg by the police. Thus he understood that

no freedom of speech or of conscience existed in Russia, and his thoughts began to turn to revolution. For participation in the students' protest, Sazonov was exiled to his native place, but a few weeks later he was again arrested because he was found to be in the possession of socialist literature. Having passed some time in prison for the second time, he was liberated, and then again arrested for participation in a peaceful socialist organization. He was, for the third time, imprisoned, kept in prison for eighteen months, and afterwards exiled to the furthest part of Siberia for a period of five years. While in prison he was subjected to the most cruel treatment. During his incarceration hundreds of political prisoners passed through the prison on their way to exile, and many of them told him terrible tales of the misdeeds of von Plehve: the shooting of workmen, the flogging of peasants, the violation of women, the massacre of the Jews, and the extermination of educated youths. "Yes, the Government made of me, from a peaceful man, a revolutionist and terrorist. When I escaped from Siberia I felt that red ghosts were creeping behind me, never leaving me by night or day, and continually whispering to me—'Go and kill Plehve!' Since I began to understand the work of the Ministers in Russia, I felt I had no right to enjoy a peaceful and happy life. In killing Plehve I acted only according to the dictates of my conscience!" Sazonov concludes by the expression of deep regret for the death of the coachman of Plehve and for the serious injury done to another man by the explosion of the bomb.

I leave these words to speak for their author and those engaged in the same desperate cause. Two things may be remarked in the recent terrorist episodes—the

general sympathy of Russian society with the conspirators, and the failure of the police either to protect its masters or to destroy the revolutionary organization. Only once has a capture of any substantial importance been made, outside the agents immediately engaged. This exception was represented at the trial by court-martial in St. Petersburg on March 2, 1904, and following days, of Dr. Gershouni, a striking personality, and probably at the time the leading spirit of the "Organisation of Combat," and four others—M. Melinkov, a former student of the Mining Institute; Aaron Veytsenfeld, a Jewish workman; Ludmilla Remyannikov, a merchant's daughter and medical student; and E. Grigoriev, an artillery officer. Some of these were found guilty of implication in the murder of MM. Sipyagin and Bogdanovitch and the attack on Prince Obolensky. The incriminating information was obtained from Grigoriev and his wife, and from Kachour, who was brought from Schlusselburg to give evidence, and whose mind appeared to be unhinged. Gershouni and Melinkov were sentenced to be imprisoned in Schlusselburg for life, Grigoriev to four years' penal servitude; Miss Remyannikov, who had only been guilty of circulating illegal literature, to three months' imprisonment and police supervision afterwards, and Veytsenfeld to four years' hard labour.

It is also significant that during the four years covered by the above list of thirteen assassinations and eleven attempts, not a single attack has been made upon the person of the Tsar. Nicholas II. has, in fact, reduced the throne to insignificance. The Autocracy is a thing of the past; the Oligarchy is the universally recognized enemy. It was not as a member of the royal family, but as a high official, that the Grand Duke Sergius was removed, and this act only took place when

for many years he had proved his absolute unscrupulousness in the use of force against those whom he chose to consider the foes of public order. For a dozen years, as Governor-General of Moscow, he was directly responsible for the Jewish expulsions, the shooting down and imprisonment of students and workmen, and other acts of tyranny. He was, perhaps, of all the anti-Semites of the Russian official world the most notoriously virulent. His petty despotism was illustrated in August last, before there was any sign of the events which culminated in St. Petersburg on Bloody Sunday, by a decree forbidding the Educational Improvement Society of Moscow to collect newspapers and other publications for transmission to the army in Manchuria, "as such activity on the part of the Society is not mentioned in its rules and does not correspond to its professed aims." This is an exceedingly trivial illustration of the temper of the man whose death may with confidence be traced to the orders which he gave the troops, still under his command in the Moscow Military District, in the early winter of last year, and the way in which they were executed during the recent strikes. Although he had a personal character even blacker than his public record, he continued to hold influence with Nicholas II. Whatever feeling one may have as to the manner of his end, it is unquestionable that it lifted a heavy cloud from the life of the old capital of the Empire.

So much for the extremer rebels and the body, separate in its *personnel* and funds, but under the general direction of the central committee of the Revolutionary Party in the choice of times and seasons, which in the end has defeated some of its boldest and most resourceful adversaries.

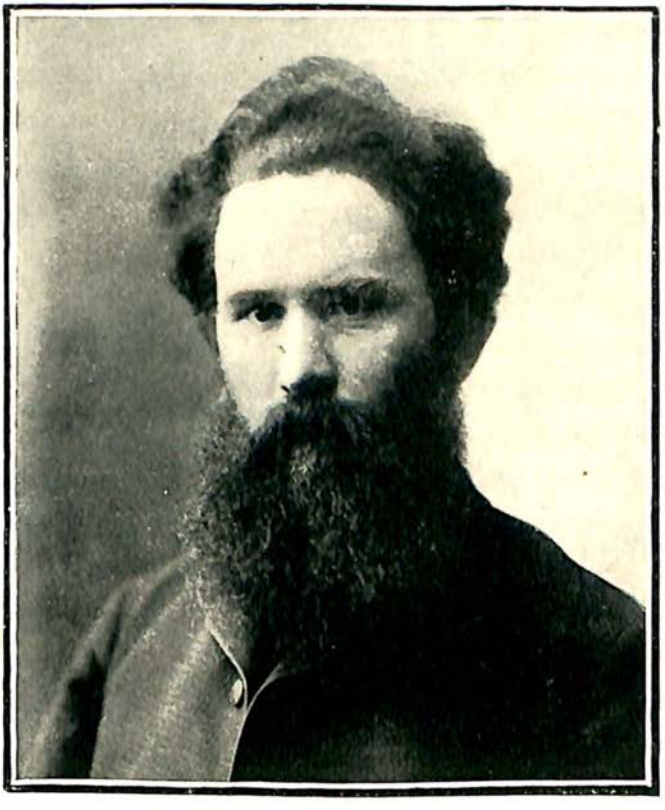
It is pleasant to turn, by way of reminder that there is a small but growing group of sincere, earnest,

and gifted radicals, who pursue the same end of national liberation by purely pacific means, to two outstanding figures that had been known sympathetically to English readers for some years before the recent crisis turned them into active politicians—the two authors Korolenko and Gorky.

It is more than ten years since, at the house of a Russian refugee, I met Vladimir Korolenko, then, after Tolstoy, the most highly rated living Russian novelist (for Gorky had not yet come up from the world of outcasts), a robust, unemotional young-middle-aged man, with keen black eyes and a shock of dark crisp hair creeping far over his cheeks. The roll of modern Russian literature is a roll of martyrdom; hardly a name upon it but stands for shame and suffering at the hands of a ruling class bound in long conspiracy against free intelligence and humanitarian fervour. Pushkin, for a skit upon a royal favourite, was six years under the ban. Lermontov was repeatedly punished. Shevchenko, the greatest poet of Little Russia, lived under perpetual pain of the lash, only escaping his early enemies—his stepmother, the parish clerk, and the farmer whom he served as swineherd—to fall beneath the whip of those in civil and military authority. Alexander Herzen, a long time imprisoned, was finally banished for life. The gentle Tchernichevsky, after being entombed awhile in the fortress, was pilloried before a St. Petersburg mob and condemned to fourteen years' hard labour at the mines and perpetual exile in Siberia. This living death lasted twenty-five years, until, mind and body alike completely broken, the kind release came. Turgeniev, for his eulogy of Gogol—albeit the great satirist had died as mad a mystic as any Romanov could desire—was thrown into prison, and then driven out of Russian society. Dostoyevsky,

the most loudly acclaimed and nearly the greatest writer of his later day, they actually dragged out upon a public scaffold, stripped to the shirt, and then read out their sentence, which was that he should be shot out of hand. At the last moment these precious judges thought the shooting too great a mercy, and so they had the poor wretch fettered, shaved, and cast into the filthy cauldron of Siberian prison-life, flogged while suffering from an epileptic attack, and otherwise tortured during what should have been his ten best and most fruitful years. These are but a few of the many; and Korolenko, who has followed in the same hard path, must be accounted fortunate in being, at fifty-two, a free, if not a favoured, man. At twenty it promised otherwise. He was then absorbed in the strangely fascinating life of a hungry student in Moscow, among hundreds in like predicament; among them, yet not of them—destined, not for agriculture, but for art. The first rumblings of revolution were waking hope and alarm; and the precocious students suffered among the first. Young Vladimir, for his part in a petition, was ordered off to the Government of Vologda, but on the way was countermanded to his home in Cronstadt, where he was strictly watched. At the height of the Terror, Korolenko, then in St. Petersburg, was called upon to pay the seemingly inevitable price of genius and conscience. Arrested by one of the mistakes which are common in Russia, and, indeed, are inherent in an arbitrary system like that of "administrative process," he was banished in 1879 to Glazov, in the northern province of Viatka, and thence moved still further north to Vyshne Volotsk. Long afterwards it leaked out that his imaginary offence was that of escaping from a gaol to which he had never been committed. He was soon removed to Perm, and began writing, with no very encouraging result. The next

MAXIM GORKY AND LEONIDE ANDREYEV.



VLADIMIR KOROLENKO.

penalty, however idiotic it may appear, was at least not the result of a mere blunder. Among other suspects, Korolenko was in 1881 called upon formally to swear allegiance to the new Tsar. Along with many who were no revolutionaries, he refused, and was packed off to Amgee, in the province of Yakutsk, to make a bare subsistence as an agricultural labourer, fortunate in having a hut to himself, and so being spared too close contact with the very undesirable natives of those parts. Three years passed—a hard but invaluable experience, as "Makar" and "The Sakhalinian" testify; then he was free to return to Novgorod and his family.

This bare outline may easily be filled in by his simplest reader. The paternal despotism which claps the boy into gaol and leaves the man free to develop his riper but no less revolutionary thought displays its imbecility so plainly that it is impossible to believe it can long survive. Korolenko's first stories were published in 1879, but it was not till long afterwards that he became known to British and American readers.* "The Blind Musician" and "In Two Moods" are powerful psychological studies. The minor stories contain some vividly drawn characters, and an astonishing wealth of scenic impressions. Sounds, lights, dreams, trivialities of movement and touch—nothing escapes this wonderful observer. I know no such picture of student life in Muscovy as he gives in a few easy pages. How and when did one not blind and no longer a lad divine the innermost experiences of the marred childish spirit? The life of the far Asian wilderness

* "The Blind Musician." Tr. by S. Stepniak and W. Westall. London: Ward & Downey. 1890. "In Two Moods" and "In Bad Society." Same translators and publishers. 1892. "Makar's Dream, etc."—"The Saghalien Convict, etc." "The Pseudonym Library." London; Fisher Unwin. 1892. A volume of Siberian sketches was translated by Mrs. Aline Delano, and published in New York (Crowell), as far back as 1887.

grows up afresh from his page, and Nature always seems to have some new secret in store for him. Above all, he has tested his own prescription. Warm humour, healthy manly energy are not so common in the best Russian literature that I need apologize for recalling these half-forgotten books. Of recent years Korolenko has held an accepted leadership in the literary society of his country, and his influence and known opinions were indicated by his presiding at the remarkable banquet of nearly 700 persons, including other prominent literary men and women, in St. Petersburg on December 3, when resolutions demanding liberty of speech, belief, publication, and meeting, equal civic and racial rights, and the summoning of a constituent assembly, were unanimously adopted. Korolenko was not in the capital on the morrow of "Bloody Sunday," when Gorky and other of his friends were arrested, but he took an early opportunity of expressing his sympathy and agreement with them.

The work of the younger author is more forcible, more recent, and so better known to the outer world. Like most of the men with whom he has been acting, Maxim Gorky (whose real name is M. A. M. Peshkov) had suffered before at the hands of the Russian police. It is not many years since he was a humble watchman in the goods department of the Gryazi-Tsaritsin Railway. One of his employers preserved the following characteristic note scribbled by him at this time:—"I have made friends with my colleagues, have learned my duties to perfection, and carry them out accurately. The station-master is satisfied, and as a mark of his confidence entrusts me with the duty of emptying all the kitchen slops every morning. Please let me know whether it is part of my duty to carry the slops from the station-master's kitchen." He was presently

promoted to the post of caretaker of the railway brooms! The struggles of his early life are indicated in his books. His literary gifts were, however, almost immediately recognized, and he soon became, as pre-eminently the spokesman of the outcast and oppressed, the hero of those consciously striving for liberty. Twice he was imprisoned on trivial pretexts—once at Tiflis, shortly after writing his first book, and once at Nijni Novgorod. In March, 1902, he was summoned under paragraph 1035 of the Civil Code, which is directed against "any abusive criticism of laws or orders operative in the Empire, with the intention of shaking the public faith in them." The offence consisted in having signed a letter of protest against the brutalities of the police in suppressing the student riots in St. Peterburg. Being in bad health, and being now a popular favourite, the punishment for this dire offence was limited to banishment in the Crimea under police supervision. At the end of the year this measure of "discipline" was modified. By order of the Government, however, and in spite of protests by Tolstoy, Korolenko, Tchekov, and others, Gorky's name was struck off the roll of honorary members of the Russian Academy. I have spoken of his part in the agitation for peace and liberty during the short interval of free speech. On January 22 he had a narrow escape from being shot along with the demonstrators. The conditions of his month's imprisonment in the Petropavlovsk fortress were just as they have been described by M. Rosenbaum and Dr. Soskice in earlier chapters. He was stripped naked, closely examined, and then clad in prison clothes. The cell was dry but cold, and so dark as to require artificial light after the mid-afternoon. On a man already predisposed to consumption, such confinement, with the aggravation of absolute silence and complete uncertainty

as to the future, must soon have proved fatal. After a few days, however, he was allowed to see his wife and a friend (through double wire screens), and to work upon a new drama, "Children of the Sun." Bail of £1000 being provided by S. Morosov, the Moscow merchant, and some literary friends, he was released, but his request to be allowed to go to the Crimea was refused; and he was sent to Riga to await trial on the charge of having written a paper declaring that as a result of the recent events the prestige of the Tsardom had been destroyed. Truth is not permitted by the oligarchy even when it has become a hoary truism.

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CHAPTER XXIII

THE PROSPECTS OF THE REVOLUTION

It is easy to speak of revolution, but who knows what revolution means in twentieth-century conditions? That the old *régime* in Russia can continue without grave modification is, I think, plainly impossible. One after another, every section of the community, except the Court and the bureaucracy, has been alienated. Manufacturers and merchants have found that the ultra-Protectionist system established by M. Witte, while it might for a time suit a few favoured individuals, was no stable basis for national industry and trade, and that the war which in its origins was closely connected with that policy has brought nothing but ruin in its train. Like humbler members of society, though, no doubt, in less painful degree, they too are at the mercy of officials insatiable in their thirst for bribes, and, without any court of appeal, they are subject to a special complication of restrictions on business. The professional man and woman are suspect as such, and the tale of their sufferings is endless. From the time of Gogol down to that of Gorky and Korolenko, there is hardly a single gifted and recognized author who has not suffered imprisonment or exile, the striking exception being the heroic figure of Tolstoy. The higher schools and Universities of the Empire are continually subject to the violent intrusion of the police, their professors

removed, their classes closed, bodies of their students rusticated or sent into penal battalions. At the same time the Press is under the tutelage of an ignorant and freakish censorship, with the inevitable result of the establishment all over the country of secret printing-offices, and the organized smuggling of great masses of books and smaller papers over the western frontiers. Worst of all is the lot of the peasantry, now finally disillusioned, in their famine-stricken villages, of the bright hopes raised by their Emancipation forty years ago.

When to this vast body of discontent was added, in every one of the growing towns of the Empire, large groups of mechanics and labourers becoming ever more conscious of the contrast between their pitiful lot and that of their Western fellows, the precipitation of an acute crisis was only a question of time and opportunity. These men may be like our own workmen in the days of Peterloo, rough uninstructed fellows; but many of them are capable of tending the same delicate machinery that is working in the mills of Preston, the workshops of Sheffield, and the arsenal of Woolwich; and, for the rest, no one who has understood his history will share the less intelligent townsman's contempt for the shrewd if untutored peasant. There was nothing abstruse in the demands of the St. Petersburg strikers, and the simplest part of those demands is that which most affects the whole of the Russian people without distinction—the petition for personal security, freedom of discussion, and the guarantee of progress which can be secured in no other way than through some form of responsible government. It is evident that the education and the spirit of these workmen have been underrated. Patience is ingrained in the Russian character till it becomes a positive weakness. The minimum of

organization shown in the recent phase of the struggle has been evolved in face of obstacles and penalties such as have perhaps never faced any popular movement in the history of the world. With whatever admixture of precocity and rashness, the early revolutionary movement of thirty years ago showed abundant power of self-sacrifice, a devotion, perhaps, never before equalled. In the present case the Russian Government has to face a much more alarming phenomenon. For the first time the organized workmen of the Empire stand before them with a resolute challenge, and with the evident sympathy and support of every other non-official class of the people.

Bullets and bayonets have never served more than a temporary purpose in an emergency of such proportions as this, and they are less than ever likely to serve now that there is no longer a Plehve at the head of the Ministry of the Interior, practised and keen in all the arts of coercion. Along the road of armed repression, I confess I see nothing but a long and bitter agony for the people, and a series of awful and shameful losses for the whole official class from the monarch downwards. Town after town will rise in sympathy with the capital; Poland, Finland, and the other subject borderlands will see their too-long-delayed opportunity. And if, when the land has been saturated with the blood of its most active and intelligent children, the order of death is ever restored, this hollow victory will be but the opening of a new era of assassination and outrage that will eclipse in horror the deeds of the earlier "terrorists." From such a spectacle, the whole world, and not only every good Russian, will pray that we may be delivered.

Recent events have wrought a change in British opinion that is curious to one who has watched for many years past the steps by which this point has

been reached. But one still constantly meets with the objection that the people of Russia are not prepared for, and even do not desire, representative government, and the question, How can a revolution succeed so long as the Army remains loyal? What is the answer to these sceptics?

In the first place I reply that, in the long story of liberation movements, there is no modern instance in which the living forces have been so conspicuously ranged on one side and the dead forces so conspicuously on the other. Consider, at the outset, the situation of the Government. It does not contain a single Minister who can be termed a powerful statesman. When M. von Plehve fell before the bomb of Sazonov and Sigorsky, it was as though the centre-pin had fallen out of the coercionist machine. Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky brought good intentions, but no other strength to the vacated office. There was an invaluable moment, in which outraged society took breath and drew its scattered and various forces together. That is what Russia owes to Sviatopolk-Mirsky, and nothing more. That more was impossible in the situation proves less the weakness of the Home Secretary who was then nominally in office than the hopelessness of the whole Governmental system in which he bore an unwilling part. While the popular forces were steadily concentrating—while Annensky and Hessen, Gorky and Korolenko, and a score of men less widely known were rallying the cultured class, and a hundred Gapons up and down the country were perfecting the organization of the workmen—the Ministerial bureaux in the capital were the scene of ceaseless intrigues, feuds of official mannikins who do not appear even to have had sense enough to see that if they did not hang together they stood a very good chance of hanging separately. *Divide et Impera* was the old bureaucratic

motto, but to-day it is working the other way. The great *tchin*, long supposed invincible, is divided against itself, as well as discredited in the eyes of the whole middle class; its old supports in the moderate nobility are alienated, even when they have not, as in such cases as those of Prince Troubetskoy and the mayors of several provincial towns, gone over openly to the Opposition. Friction has repeatedly arisen between the police and the troops, and the various Ministries have been divided into rival camps of appellants for the momentary favour of the Tsar.

This official confusion could not but be aggravated, as the reformers were encouraged and hardened, by the collapse of the unfortunate young man in whose name the massacre of January 22 was carried out. It has taken a long time and an infinity of suffering to dispose of the myth of a humane Tsar. Every one who knew anything about Nicholas II. knew from the outset of his reign that his amiability was limited not only by an utter weakness of will, but also by a tendency to what is politely called mysticism, which was likely in any crisis to make him a mere tool of the reactionaries, and especially the clerical reactionaries, who surrounded him. Against these influences his wife has never had more than a momentary power. The arch-inquisitor Pobyedonostsev has never lost his dominance in the Imperial family, and the traces of his control can be found in the acts and speeches of the Tsar from the beginning of the reign onward. The hectoring reply to the *zemstvo* petitions of last winter was precisely in the spirit of the lecture which the Tsar delivered to a deputation of peasants from the province of Tver directly after his accession. But if the fearful disaster which reddened the Khodinsky plain in Moscow while the Coronation festivities were proceeding in the neighbouring palace

failed to rouse the Russian people out of their lethargy, it is far otherwise to-day. The clock moves even in Russia. The Tsar's refusal to hold any communication with the strikers meant much more to Russians, who still have the primitive right of direct appeal to the Sovereign, than to the citizens of a Constitutional State; and that the manner of this refusal has made a deep and indelible impression is evident from the fact that for the first time cries of direct antagonism to the monarchy have been raised in the public streets and in manifestoes assured of a national circulation. After all, the kindly ignorance of the average Britisher as to the character of Nicholas was but a reflection of the kindly ignorance of the mass of his subjects. This has long been a disappearing quantity, for dropping water will wear away even a stone, and repeated refusals of the most moderate demands, repeated sanction of the most barbarous acts, must at length come home even to a peasant population the majority of whom cannot read or write. When it became universally known, not only that the Tsar refused to hear the despairing petition of peaceful workmen, as his Ministers had already done, not only that he sent the soldiery instead to clear the streets with bullets and bayonets, but that, before the crisis created by his own cowardice, he ran away, first to one palace and then to another—when this extraordinary intelligence penetrated from town to town, and from village to village, one of the last props of the oligarchy fell, and it became only a matter of time for the whole structure, discredited, divided, bankrupt, and now put to open shame, to fall to the ground.

"St. Petersburg is the last city in Europe for an ill-armed and undisciplined mob to tackle," says a pessimistic writer, and he adds: "The question whether the present outbreak will succeed is identical with the

question, Will the troops remain loyal? Russians have not yet learned the art of street fighting. The St. Petersburgers have no leaders of repute. In short, all indications so far go to show that the Government will triumph." We may expect this note to be struck, with many variations, as the movement passes from the phase of a few dramatic events in the capitals into that of a wearing routine struggle throughout the country; but I venture to think that this sort of objection is so far wide of the mark as to be almost pointless in regard to the situation now developing. Nobody supposed that a *coup d'état* in St. Petersburg was possible last January; no single group of the Opposition had any such mad hope, and nobody was prepared for armed action of any kind. St. Petersburg is, it is quite true, the least hopeful scene in the Empire for such a struggle, not alone because of the difficulties of street fighting in the capital, but because there the military and police forces are strongest, and the industrial population comparatively less numerous and organized than in a dozen other towns of the Empire. This fact is, however, the strongest possible testimony to the strength of the national movement. There had been several recent battues in the streets of the capital, but most of the victims had hitherto been the students, only a few individual workmen being involved. For instance, when the demonstration on the Nevsky Prospekt on November 28–December 11 last was broken up by mounted police, gendarmes, and dvorniks, the wounded, given in the official report as forty-two and really much more numerous, only included, of the working class, two railway men and two labourers. If the application of the state of siege has not succeeded in suppressing the pioneers of revolt in thirty years, very much less likely is it to succeed in suppressing a revolted nation now

that the workmen even of the Government factories in the capital have been driven to the last desperate resort of outraged humanity. Nor is leadership lacking. The revolutionists of thirty years ago, men, some of them, who can be compared with Kossuth and Garibaldi or any other liberators of the West, were leaders without followers; there are followers enough to-day and more leaders than ever, behind the veil. What happens immediately in St. Petersburg is of secondary importance. It is precisely because this is not a rising in the capital after the old-time Western fashion, but a widespread movement embracing the capacities of every class of all the peoples of the empire, that I am confident, not indeed of immediate results, for it may last long, but for steady progress and victory in the early future. Paris fashions do not run everywhere. The Boers taught us, at considerable cost, that modern weapons lend themselves to other kinds of use than those usual on the Old World drill-ground. The Russians will now show us that there are other sorts of revolution than those known to our English history books.

The importance of the attitude of the Army—or rather of that part of it which is left in Europe—in the present crisis, is too evident to need any insistence. The Government has in the chief towns large bodies of ordinary police and gendarmes at its service, but these would alone be utterly powerless against such demonstrations as are now taking place. In fact, for some years past the calling out of the soldiery in times of labour agitation has been resorted to. On several occasions of this kind the troops have refused to fire, but these occurrences have, as far as is authentically known, been so infrequent that I do not lay any stress upon them in attempting to answer the question—Can

PRINCE DMITRI TROUBETSKOY.
(*President of the Moscow Zemstvo.*)

M. POBYEDONOSTSEV.

PRINCE GALITZIN.
(*Mayor of Moscow.*)

the Army be relied upon to suppress their fellows among the peasantry and workmen, now that the flag of revolt is seriously raised? There is, however, little doubt that for three years past at least there has been a steady growth of what is called "seditious" feeling in the army, although how deeply this has sunk into the men's minds it is difficult to say. I have before me the text of a number of circulars of which the earliest, marked "Most confidential," was issued as far back as August, 1902, by General Kuropatkin to the generals commanding the different military districts of the empire. "The attempts of political agitators," it begins, "to carry on propaganda among the troops, which were in former times comparatively rare phenomena, have occurred more frequently of late, and have become so bold that they make it necessary to fix special attention on them." Then followed details of about a dozen separate cases in which flysheets had been sent to and circulated, sometimes "in considerable numbers," among the officers and men of various garrisons, from St. Petersburg to Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, these manifestoes exhorting the army not to raise their arms against their brethren, the peasants and workmen. In one case, said the General, "organized propaganda was detected among the rank and file of the Ekaterinoslav Grenadier Guards," being carried on not only by outsiders, "but even by the privates themselves. At the head of this organization was a soldier, of the noble class, one Alshansky, who purposely concealed his privilege of serving for a shorter term in order to be able to carry on propaganda among the rank and file for a longer time. During his service in the ranks Alshansky spread his revolutionary ideas with much energy, by personal talk as well as by the spreading in large quantities of pamphlets, manifestoes, and the like. Some of the

privates became direct co-workers in Alshansky's criminal activity, while others showed connivance, or were guilty of not reporting what was going on." The circular went on to refer to another case of the kind, and suggested that, "given the necessary caution and dissimulation in the activity of the agitators, many such instances have probably remained undiscovered."

If there was this cause for anxiety three years ago, much more ground is there to-day, when the army, as well as the civil population, is filled with disgust over the disasters of a useless war. Before the war began the increasing frequency of the discovery of subversive literature in barracks had given rise to a further series of secret circulars, in which officers were instructed to exercise the strictest surveillance over their men, to carry out periodical searches of the soldiers' quarters, and even of their persons, and to limit as far as possible their contact with the outside world. As a consequence arrests have been made during the last two years in Odessa, Kovno, Byelostok, and other towns, and even in the Imperial Guards a number of soldiers have been tried and punished for reading and circulating "illegal" literature. Two men named Stervin and Shiglovsky, of one of these high-class regiments, for instance, were sentenced in August last to eight years of convict work in the Siberian mines and three years of penitentiary labour respectively. Stimulated by the unpopularity of the war and by the stern measures taken to suppress the public feeling, the discontent both in the army and the navy has greatly increased of late, and the recent mutinous incidents in the Baltic Fleet, the outbreak at Cronstadt, the burning down of the naval arsenal at Sevastopol, of which the Government suggests no other explanation, the incident of the Neva salute, and the frequent resistance of the mobilization of reserves,

especially in the Polish towns, are sufficient to prove that the discontent of the common soldiers and sailors, who are only peasants and workmen at one remove, has become a grave factor in the situation. At Radom, for instance, in November last, the place had to be filled with troops before the mobilization could be carried out at all, and even then it was delayed for several days by a street conflict—in which an infantry commandant, Colonel Bulakov, another officer, and a gendarme were killed—and by the blowing up of two bridges with dynamite. At the New Year an Imperial order was issued subjecting to punishment by court-martial reservists who took part in "excesses" when called up; and though this decree was moderated "on representations being made" to those responsible, it has been carried out in a number of cases, notably in that of the "mutinous" reservists at Volkovsk in the province of Grodno in March last, five of whom were executed, four sentenced to penal servitude for life, and eight to penal servitude for twenty years.

Official statements to the contrary notwithstanding, it was evident so early as last midsummer, when I visited Moscow and Warsaw, that the Manchurian war was very far from being popular. An unbroken series of reverses on land and sea, culminating in the North Sea incident, the fall of Port Arthur—in circumstances which, if the *Times* Peking correspondent is right, themselves point to deep demoralization—and the disaster of Mukden, must have affected the spirit of the army as seriously as the simultaneous suffering at home affected the spirit of the civil population. Never was the division between men of war and men of peace more clearly exhibited. As the cry, "Down with the Tsardom!" has been raised openly by a mass of common people for the first time, so for the first time the cry,

"Stop the war!" has been openly raised by all sorts and conditions of men. Upon ground so prepared there fall such words as those contained in one of Father Gapon's epistles: "Against soldiers and officers who are slaying their innocent brothers, together with the wives and children of these, and against all oppressors of the people, I utter my pastoral curse. Upon soldiers who help the nation to win liberty I invoke a blessing, and from the military oath of allegiance which they took to the traitorous Tsar, at whose behest the blood of innocent people was shed, I hereby absolve them." If, in face of all this, tradition and the threats of General Trepov and the gang of subordinate despots in the provinces prove sufficient to hold the soldiery to its unspeakable task, it must be admitted that we are but on the eve of a long and terrible struggle—a war between the Russian people and the subject nationalities on the one hand, and the army, the bureaucracy, and the Court on the other. It is difficult to conceive, and revolting even for a moment to consider, such a prospect. But if it must be considered, I hold confidently still that the people will win. For a *coup d'état* Russian conditions are almost impossibly difficult; for a slowly gathering insurrectionary movement they are very favourable, especially so long as the great body of the effective army is locked up in the Far East, involving a steady drain on the whole of the resources of the Government. The great towns are widely separated by nature, and they can be easily yet more effectually isolated. In Moscow, Odessa, Warsaw, Riga, Kovno, Reval, Kishinev, Lodz, Ekaterinoslav, Baku, and half a dozen other industrial centres, the workmen have already suffered their baptism of fire, and they are now again afoot. Even if all those towns could be permanently occupied and coerced, it would be

quite impossible to deal with a *jacquerie* in the thinly populated country to which the struggle would be momentarily diverted. In the final resort there would be a revival of terrorism on a scale hitherto unimagined.

But if the infatuated continuance of the struggle against the Japanese has seriously aggravated the problem for the Government, it by no means follow that it will be solved by the conclusion of peace. The oligarchy is infatuated enough, but its madness is not quite so unmethodical as it seems to the superficial observer. The difficulties in the way of its appealing for peace are perfectly real, and it is in these difficulties that we shall find the explanation of the otherwise inexplicable course it has pursued. When Nicholas II. said, on the eve of the Mukden *débâcle*, that he would continue the war till his power was re-established on the waters of the Pacific, he may have supposed that he was imposing upon a credulous world; but there is no reason to believe that he really entertained this mighty aim. Bluff is the incurable habit of the hardened Imperialist. Russia meant land-grabbing, exploitation, monopoly in the Far East; everything but war, for which she was in no way ready. Bluff is useless to-day; but if a man cannot be silent and must not speak the truth, what would you? No! it was not the Pacific the Imperial mannikin was thinking of, but something much nearer and more urgent. It was all very well for sagacious outsiders to say that it was no disgrace or humiliation to acknowledge and abandon a task physically impossible. It can never be easy to acknowledge defeat at the hands of an enemy one began by despising. But for a military theocracy, a Government resting absolutely on force and superstition, until it was absolutely compelled, to acknowledge defeat at

the hands of an enemy whom it has ridiculed as a nation of monkey-faced barbarians, against whom it has brought out its best armies and its most treasured ikons, and to whom it had already sacrificed a great fleet and a great fortress and scores of thousands of lives, this would be a humiliation so disastrous that the oligarchy might well tremble at the thought of it and hope against hope for some way of escape. Who would have applauded the authors of so brave a decision? Not the guardians of the sacred but useless ikons; not stay-at-home dukes, or the servile bureaucracy, or the contractors who were making fortunes after the manner of their kind in war time. Not the stop-the-war demonstrators, although this was their demand; for they were at least as anxious for liberty as for peace, the stoppage of the war being indeed only a step toward a greater end which they would be encouraged to pursue with greater vigour than ever. So with the rest of the people. Every mind would be relieved, but none grateful. The manufacturers and merchants, some of whose most important markets and sources of supply had been cut off when the Siberian railway was taken over for the army, and whose home demand was reduced by the constant drafting away of reserves, while prices were rising and labour troubles gathering, would rejoice, but they could hardly be expected to thank a Government which had involved them, not in one compaign but in two, of which the graver would be left further than ever from settlement. The *zemstvos* and municipal councils, which have had to help to maintain hundreds of thousands of women and children for a year past? Yes, provided that the worst of the burden was not to come; but that must depend largely on the terms of peace. The peasantry? Yes, but peace will not give them back their dead, or erase the broad impression of

this immeasurable crime. And the army—the already discontented, now wholly disillusioned army? In a word, the benefits of peace could at best only come slowly, and they would not come at all, the scene of warfare would only be transferred, unless the oligarchy itself abdicated.

The difficulty takes a still more material and urgent shape. To be compelled to make peace meant not only the sacrifice of all designs on China and the China Sea, not only humiliation abroad and at home: it meant also having to pay a substantial indemnity, and this was only possible by the aid of the Western money-lenders, who are getting very tired of these particular clients, and whose interests, hardly less than those of the Russian peasant and workman, require that the oligarchy should abdicate. The Tsar is in his own "right" many times a millionaire; but unfortunately the days have not come when the war-lords are required to pay for their own adventures. The State Exchequer is practically insolvent. It is reaching the end of its borrowing powers, and to raise more money in any substantial amounts by taxation is simply impossible. To reform the system must at best be a work of years—a work that can only be carried out by new men under full publicity with a national mandate. The financial credit of the old *régime* is shattered. A war indemnity is the last straw. Such, I imagine, is the *impasse* in which the Tsar and his advisers find themselves. Their destiny awaits them whether they go forward or backward.

The hypocritical optimism of M. Kokovtsev's Budget statement for 1905 deceived no one. Nobody expected that he would place all the cards on the table; but calmly to cut out the whole question of the cost of the war, save for a sentence in which it is estimated to

have involved an expenditure of about sixty-five million pounds up to the end of last year, was too much for the patience even of comparatively disinterested English financiers. What the war has cost and what has been spent are, of course, two very different things. Even on the official figures the outlook is bad enough. The balance at the opening of the present year may be thus summarized:—

	Million roubles.
From free balances	157
By reduction of expenditure	148
Two loans of 1904	432
	737
Less war expenditure	621
	116

To this twelve millions sterling has been added the product of the last German loan, say £21,000,000, and the internal loan of £20,000,000, giving a total of £53,000,000, or enough to continue the war—if all these official figures were reliable—till midsummer without further borrowing. But the Estimates are a farrago of suppression on the one side, and exaggeration on the other. The cost of the war, which had steadily increased, must have been at the very least half as large again as the estimate above quoted, or £120,000,000 per annum. At the same time, the ordinary expenditure of the Empire must be immensely larger, and the income for the present year considerably smaller, than the Minister who boasts that "there has been no serious disturbance either in the State finances or the national prosperity" dared to budget for. The liquor monopoly, as we have seen (pp. 134, 139), is expected to produce as much as last year (£52,000,000), although it had already begun to fall off before the strikers took to wrecking the vodka

shops. The State railways are expected to produce much more, although the only increasing traffic is that of the army. The total revenue is, in fact, left practically at last year's figure. On the other hand, the ordinary expenditure of the War Office and the cost of the Home Office, which includes the police, are supposed to increase by less than a million sterling each, though every big city is an armed camp. Prison expenditure is to be cut down, though the prisons are overflowing. Outlay on railways and other urgently needed public works is to be rigorously reduced, and yet trade and labour are to bear more than the old burden of taxation! The whole scheme is so extraordinarily stupid that we can only suppose that M. Kokovtsev has as poor an idea of the intelligence of the Western investor as of the educated class of his own people. It may be that the truth, or even a large modicum of the truth, would have proved fatal to the latest loan negotiations. But was it any better to issue a document full of quite evidently false estimates, and prefaced by the announcement that "the Budget now presented to your Imperial Majesty does not include the estimates of the Extraordinary Expenditure to be incurred in 1905 for carrying on the war with Japan"?

The distracted condition of the Government financiers was amusingly illustrated when, after the appearance of two articles by Mr. Lucien Wolf in the *Times* in March last, in which a happy analogy was drawn between the famous gold reserve and the safe in which Mme. Humbert kept her mythical millions, M. Kokovtsev telegraphed a panic-stricken challenge to this and other British journals to send representatives over to St. Petersburg to examine the treasure in the vaults of the State Bank. The negotiations for a new French loan had just broken down, while Japan was about to receive the

offer of ten times as much as she wanted. No wonder that M. Kokovtsev was agitated. But the challenge was as futile as it was undignified. The undoubted existence of a substantial fund in gold did not in any way settle the question whether official Russia was insolvent. Even if it could meet its liabilities in normal times, the question remained how much of this hoard, if any, was available toward the costs of the war. Why, indeed, if it had in hand, as was claimed, a realizable reserve of nearly a hundred million pounds sterling, should the Russian Government have been prostrating itself before the money-lenders of Europe?

We have seen that for years before the war it had been conducting its business at a loss, which was only made good by continual borrowing. In examining the Budget (p. 133) it was shown that in the years 1896–1905 (not including war expenditure) the "ordinary" Budgets gave surpluses amounting to £122 millions, while the "extraordinary" Budgets gave deficits amounting to £175·7 millions. There was thus a net deficit of £53·3 millions in the ten years, a considerably worse result than that of the previous decade. This record is confirmed, so far as they go, by the statistics of the balance of foreign trade. The latest British Statistical Abstract for foreign countries gives the following details for Russia, in the years 1892–1901, in millions of pounds sterling:—

	Exports.	Imports.	Balance.
Merchandise	688·5	577·2	+ 111·3
Bullion and Specie	38·4	118·5	— 80·0
Net surplus of Exports	...	...	£31,223,000

In the later years, for which full returns are not yet available, the export drain has been larger, but if we place it at £5 millions, or even at £10 millions sterling,

per annum, it will be immediately evident that this is quite insufficient to pay the annual charges due by Russia to foreign countries.

The first of these is, of course, interest on debt. The Public Debt of the Empire has risen from £500 millions in 1889 to about £750 millions at the beginning of 1905; and the charge on this account in the Estimate for 1905 is £32 millions sterling, of which the great bulk is due to French and other foreign holders. The guaranteed railway bonds and Bank of Nobility mortgages held abroad, estimated at about £70 millions, require an annual payment of, say, £3 millions. In addition, there are State payments for the purchase of war material abroad, and private payments of profits and interest to the foreign owners of enterprises and investments in Russia and Russians living abroad, charges probably amounting to at least another £10 millions. Mr. Lucien Wolf estimates that "the Russian Empire, as a trading concern, is carrying on its great business at an annual loss of at least 250 million roubles." It seems to me that this is an under-statement, that the difference between the surplus exportation and the foreign charges it ought to meet amounts to a deficit of at least £30 millions per annum, a sum, let me remark, equal to a half of the whole product of taxation, properly so-called, in the Empire.

The reader unacquainted with the history of the great financial system built up by M. Witte will ask how this terrible deficit is covered, and how, after covering it, the Treasury can hold a huge store of gold in the vaults of the State Bank. These magicians keep their secrets well, and no full and precise account of their resources and manœuvres can at present be given. The fact that a National Assembly, even if called only for consultative purposes, would demand

some further honesty and publicity in the sphere of national finance is, indeed, probably the most substantial objection that the oligarchy has to any such reform. But the main fact is plain and incontestable: the regular deficits are met by new borrowing, the interest of new loans is paid out of the new. The vaunted gold reserve consists of unspent margins of the loans of the last twenty years, reinforced by the produce of the State gold mines (three or four millions sterling a year), and latterly by a forced increase of the paper currency, and by draining the savings and provincial banks of their gold reserves.* If such is the reckoning under peace conditions, how much worse is it when we take into account the expenditure on the war, the prospect of a heavy indemnity, and the costs of replacing destroyed property? In his last Budget M. Kokovtsev did not dare to publish any estimate of the cost of the Japanese campaign, which, after fourteen months, cannot have amounted to less than

* Criticisms of the above purport were replied to in the London *Daily Chronicle* of April 3, 1905, by Mr. Arthur Raffalovitch, the Russian Financial Agent in Paris. The reply does not, I think, touch the main facts on which I have rested. Mr. Raffalovitch says that the stock of gold at the disposal of the Bank of Russia at the end of 1904 was 1022 million roubles, or 494 millions more than was legally necessary to cover the note issues, "and if to this is added the gold stock of the Treasury, the margin for the new issue of notes of credit would amount to 711 million roubles." (Cf. p. 131.) But a further issue of notes, while legally possible, would speedily involve a suspension of gold payments and consequent fluctuations in the value of the rouble. Mr. Raffalovitch speaks of the "extraordinary" Budget expenditure as having gone "almost exclusively in the development and the amelioration of the national resources" (an amiable paraphrase for Port Arthur, the Pacific Fleet, and the Manchurian Railway!); and he adds: "from 1889 to 1903 Russia has received in money as the net product of foreign loans contracted by her a sum of only £48 millions. The other operations which have swollen the figures of the Russian debt have been the conversion of Government stock at 6, 5, and 4½ per cent. to 4, 3½, and 3 per cent., or the purchases of railways by the State, which has replaced the companies' shares by its own stock. Russia has used her credit abroad much less than many people think." The meaning of the last sentence, if it has any, escapes me.

£150 millions sterling, without counting the loss of Port Arthur, the sunk fleet, and other property.* But the stoppage of this bloodshed will in no way solve the problem of Russian finance.

For what, in brief, is the position? The Tsardom has no available gold reserve of any size; its subjects cannot pay more taxes; the railways, in which it has sunk hundreds of millions, as I have shown, do not yield a profit; while its only considerably profitable business, the spirit monopoly, is insufficient to provide a balance of normal revenue. Its debt is held abroad, and, after draining the peasantry of everything but the barest minimum of food, it cannot pay the interest except by new borrowing. Every loan is raised on harder terms, and every time a larger part has to be left abroad to meet its obligations. Finally, there is the immediate prospect of a heavy indemnity, and the certainty of other heavy war charges which will mean Budgetary deficits for years to come. If this does not justify the analogy of the "Humbert safe," let the name of that distinguished lady never more be mentioned. By prodigal but skilful expenditure in keeping up prices on the chief foreign Bourses, an air of solvency has been maintained so far, but revolution is not cured by petty trickery. Paris is tired and sick of its "ally"; and Berlin cannot be counted upon to go

* The St. Petersburg correspondent of *Le Matin* (March 31, 1905) offers the following estimate of Russian losses: Killed, wounded, and prisoners, *plus* 7000 sick per month, make an approximate general total of 435,000, leaving at Linevitch's disposal no more than 300,000 men. £90 millions is given as the cost of the Manchurian Railway with the up-keep of the line, the losses caused by the Chunchuses, the construction of the city and port of Dalny, and of Port Arthur. War expenses and foreign loans amount to £57 millions, State securities £15 millions, the loss of 1480 guns £1 million, confiscation of merchantmen £1 million, and the loss of the fleet £16 millions. Thus, including the recent internal loan, the war has cost, so far, two milliards of roubles (£200 millions).

further. As a last resort, the State can revert to a paper currency, and impound all the gold reserves of the Treasury and the Imperial Bank, which, in the latter case, stand as security against its advances to trading concerns. The prospect for the bank is in any case gloomy enough, for it has been diminishing its cash assets and increasing its speculative transactions in recent years. But a return to paper currency would be a crushing blow to Russian credit, and it will be delayed as long as possible.

However inadequate may be this review of the last thirty-five years of Russian public life, the general course of events in the Empire has been indicated; and, while the growth of the movement of national liberation has been shown to justify the faith of the friends of Russian freedom, and to give assurance of a happier future, the revolution has been traced to the inexorable operation of economic law rather than to any personal efforts, however heroic. At the outset, in words penned ten years ago beside the Volga at Nijni Novgorod, it was suggested that the oligarchy had evoked forces the character of which it did not understand, and which would presently prove fatal to it. This is what has happened. The revolt of the "intellectuals," and the subsequent revolt of the workmen, have hastened an inevitable development. Bureaucracy can only live by force and hypnotism. But to-day even the peasantry are awakening to a consciousness of their wrongs and their powers; and, incapable and insolvent in every part, defeated and humiliated in the enterprise to which it had already sacrificed the welfare of its subjects, and yet afraid of bringing back a chagrined and disaffected army to the sight of its ravaged homes, the tyranny is at length caught between

the devil of the revolution and the deep sea of the war costs. There it stands, pitifully, ludicrously obstinate, while the ground slowly crumbles beneath its feet. The end is not yet. Thousands of new victims may be swept away into prison and exile, years of bloodshed may pass, "strikes" developing into local insurrection, and, if this be crushed, into a campaign of destruction and revenge in town and country, ere the people's will becomes supreme. But the result can be none other. The immense potentialities of the Russian mind are in nothing more signally shown than in this desperate fidelity to the ideal of social liberty. The democrats of the dark empire must fight their own battle; but our pulse beats faster as we think of the great hazard they have cast, and all that for them and the world depends upon the issue. A nation once really aroused cannot be suppressed, any more by modern than by ancient contrivances. Determined to be free, it is already free. By ways of war or by ways of peace, soon or less soon, the revolution will succeed, and this great people, long thwarted, will take its rightful place among the free and progressive States of the world.

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